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Get in contact with Maureen Yeo,
Regional Director for Asia
+41 79 575 28 28
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Photography **David Yeow**

arflex

italian design story

Photo T. Pagani



Marenco sofa design Mario Marengo

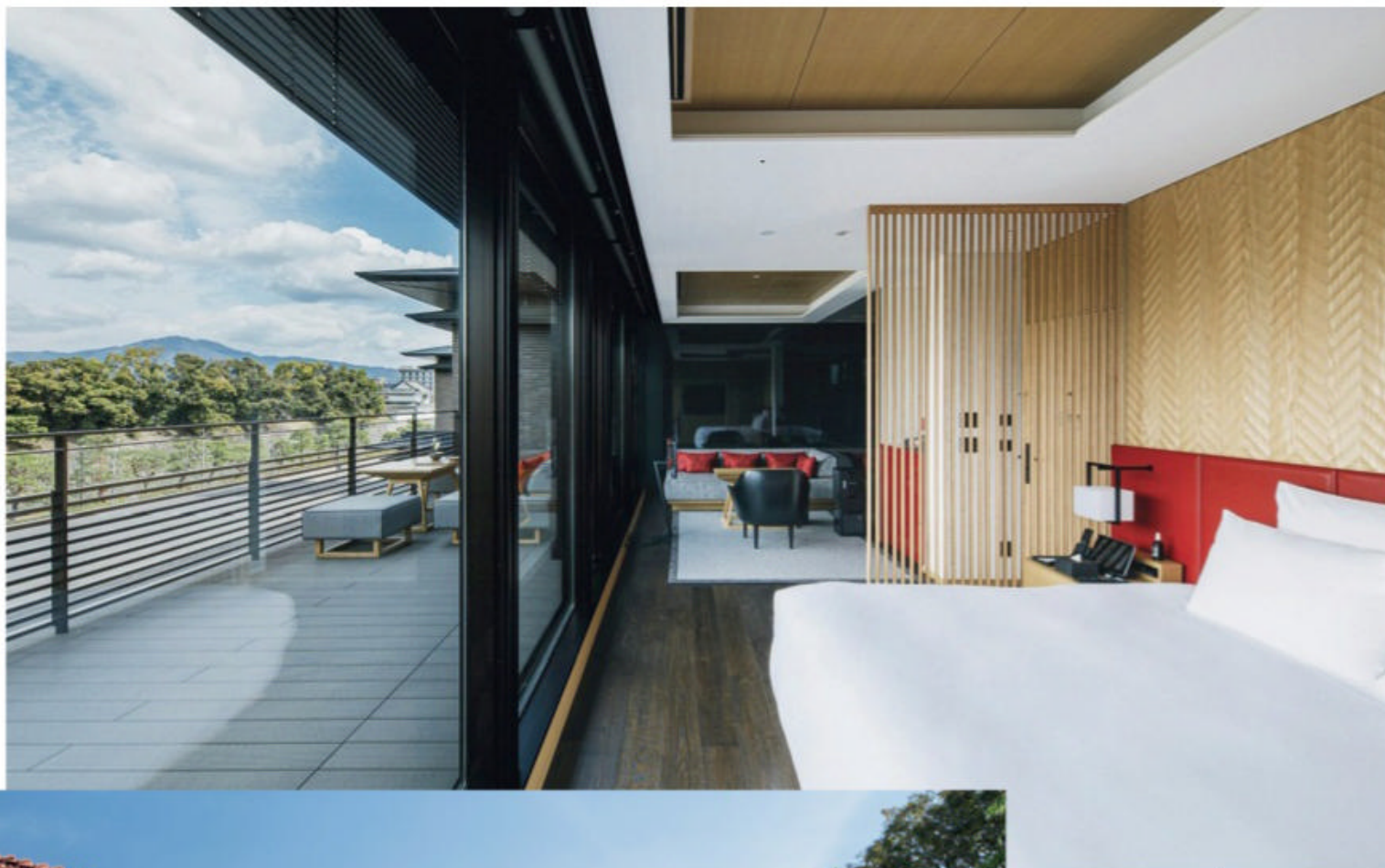
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Celebrating Life's Special Moments



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1-Wick Sage Candles | Sense, Bottle Chiller | V&A William Morris



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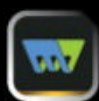
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Left to right: The magnificent staircase in The Helical Pearl in Ipoh; this enchanting Johannesburg home was inspired by treehouses



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Room to Grow

This issue marks the 7th print publication of Tatler Homes Malaysia, and as they say, time flies when you're having fun.

Indeed it's been over two years since we rebooted this brand, and we've had a ball curating not just homes but studios, museums, restaurants, showrooms, hotels and offices varying in size, ambition and style from across this beautiful country.

We've taken deep dives into a wide range of topics ranging from F&B design to future-proofing. We've had the pleasure of interviewing design icons like Kengo Kuma, Serina Hijjas, Laurence Loh and Donatella Versace. We've been privy to the process of artists, landscape designers and graphic designers over studio visits — and even nosed around the eden-esque gardens of rare plant collectors.

So it seems like an appropriate time to kick off the Tatler Homes Design Awards in Malaysia. A mainstay of the Singapore design scene entering its 7th iteration this year, we hope to chart a similarly successful trajectory with our edition. With the Tatler Homes Design Awards - Malaysia, we look forward to celebrating the best projects featured in our print and digital editions and provide a platform for our formidable homegrown talents.

Apart from announcing the inaugural awards in this issue, we shine a spotlight on sustainability through a multi-faceted prism. First, we interview Bee Eu Tan, the Penang-based architect whose remarkable career thus

far in adaptive reuse projects has a touch of serendipity to it. Although one could say that there's nothing accidental about the skilful and intuitive way she's breathed new life into heritage buildings. Tan, a Tatler Asia's Most Influential honouree for two years running, is also one of our jury members for this year's Tatler Homes Design Awards - Malaysia.

Enjoy a tour of EDI Architect's wonderfully light-filled studio transformed from an ordinary three-studio shophouse in Petaling Jaya. Green not just in aesthetics and design; the studio's philosophy of creating a sustainable work culture permeates this calming space.

As always, there's a variety of jaw-dropping homes to pore over. Our cover story in Ipoh by A3 Projects is ample proof that stunning looks and sustainability need not be mutually exclusive. The lovely new home of Awal Ashaari and Scha Al-Yahya is an extravagant manifestation of this celebrity couple's personalities, while in contrast, DualSpace's home in Jade Hills is a masterclass in warm minimalism.

Before you can catch your breath, zip around the world transported by our international projects, which range from a sleek "tree house" in Johannesburg to a beach house inspired by sandcastles in Florida.

Here's to the many more issues of being inspired by design.

—Jennifer Choo, Editor-in-chief

THE GUEST LIST



TEH WENG JEN

Teh Weng Jen spent most of his early career working as an architectural graduate and wore another hat as a design photographer under the pseudonym TWJPTO on weekends. Based in Penang and Kuala Lumpur, he transitioned fully to professional photography in early 2022 while enjoying a career sabbatical from the nine-to-five architectural grind. By now, he has almost ten years of experience shooting architectural and interior works all around Malaysia. He turns his eye and lens to Vault Design's extravagant penthouse in Penang (p.156).



KAREN TEE

Karen is a lifestyle journalist who finds joy in inspiring an appreciation for the finer things in life. As a certified yoga instructor, she's most likely to be spotted on the yoga mat in her free time or sipping a flat white while planning her next odyssey. For this issue, she profiles American architect Jeffrey Dungan's sandcastle-inspired beach home in Florida (p.110) and Australian interior designer Greg Natale's transformation of a family home in Brisbane (p.164).



DAVID YEOW

David Yeow is an architectural photographer with a love for design and the built environment. Graduating with a Masters of Architecture from the University of Melbourne, he worked for a few years at Cox Architecture before diving into photography full time. He is interested in the play between light and shadow, and seeks to photograph spaces in their natural light. He captures our cover story in Ipoh (p.120), Awal Ashaari and Scha Al-Yahya's home (p.100), DualSpace's Jade Hills project (p.138), EDI Architect's "green" studio (p.62) and Jun Ong's pet-friendly home (p.76).

Tom Dixon's Etch
Puff pendant lamps
launching in April,
available from Gudang.
Opposite page: Magis
Vuido outdoor rocking
chair made from
eco-friendly materials,
available from Forest
Furniture

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THE

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SCENE

EDITOR'S PICKS

DISCO FEVER

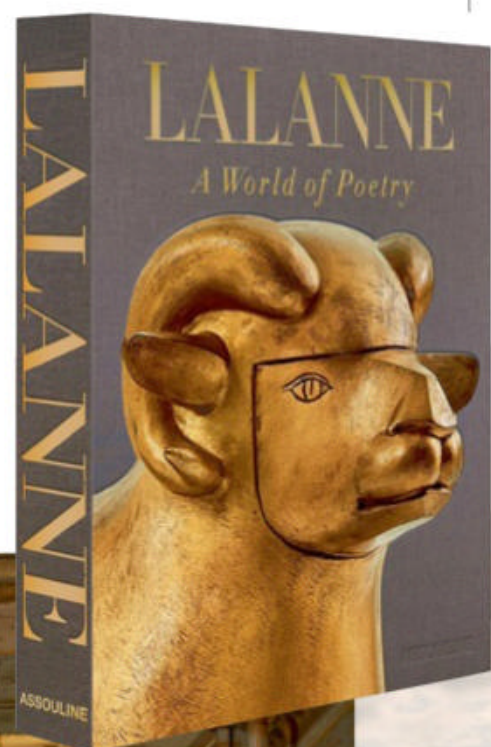
Bring the energy and dynamism of dance halls into your abode with the Etch Puff pendant lamps from Tom Dixon, launching this April at the upcoming Milan Design Week. Part of the Etch family of faceted lamps, these pendant lights playfully recall the appearance and shine of disco balls with their eye-catching mirrored finish, while their unusual form combines diamond motifs and curved details. *Available at Gudang; gudanghome.com*



NEW CLASSIC

Like in a concert performance, a conductor helps realise a harmonious performance with a keen understanding of the score, melody and musicians. Similarly, the Poliform Symphony sideboards by Emmanuel Gallina embrace that delicate balance of design elements

with their simple forms and impeccable details, and standing on slim aluminium feet. Choose between wood veneer or marble for the top, and a variety of heights and sizes that come with doors as well as drawers and shelves. *Available at Space Furniture; spacefurniture.com.sg*



COUNTING SHEEP

Learn more about the works of François-Xavier and Claude Lalanne, the dynamic French couple behind the highly sought-after animal sculptures in this new book published by Assouline. Penned by Jean-Gabriel Mitterrand, a close friend and long-time gallerist of the duo, known collectively as *Les Lalanne*, *Lalanne: A World of Poetry* charts the couple's love story and their subsequent meteoric rise in the art world.

From their most recognisable flocks of sheep and a menagerie of myriad anthropomorphic animals to transformable copper pieces that blur the boundaries between furniture and sculpture, the influential couple's spellbinding creations made art part of everyday life while combining an irresistible blend of ancient mythology, craft techniques, and natural influences from flora and fauna. *assouline.com*

WORK IT OUT

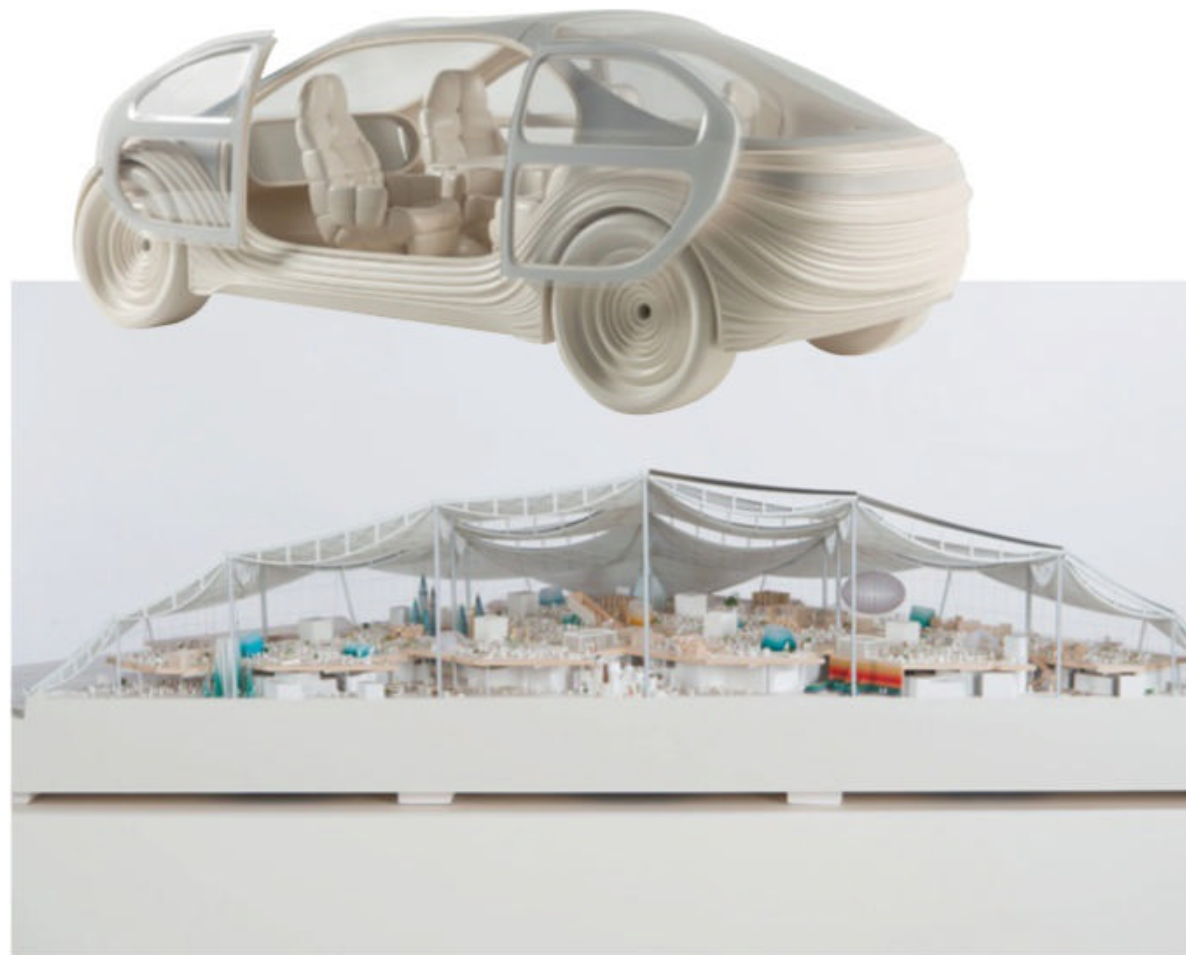
Founded by the family of Henri Matisse, Maison Matisse revels in the innovative spirit and vibrant compositions intrinsic to the French visual artist's famed oeuvre. The brand's new collection Les Mille et Une Nuits comprises a sprightly array of workspace accessories with colourful, asymmetric details inspired by the painting it's named after. Sliced from blocks of cork, this selection of stools, trays, shelf units and other accessories are reminiscent of the paper-cut design of the namesake work. *maison-matisse.com*



OBJECTS AND PLACES

Running at Mori Art Museum in Tokyo, Japan from 17 March to 4 June, the *Building Soulfulness* exhibition showcases the work of UK-based Heatherwick Studio through videos, interactive elements as well as models

and material samples. Over 20 of the studio's most memorable designs will be presented: these include Airo, a full-scale car model, along with mechanised versions of the firm's popular Magis Spun chairs. *mori.art.museum*

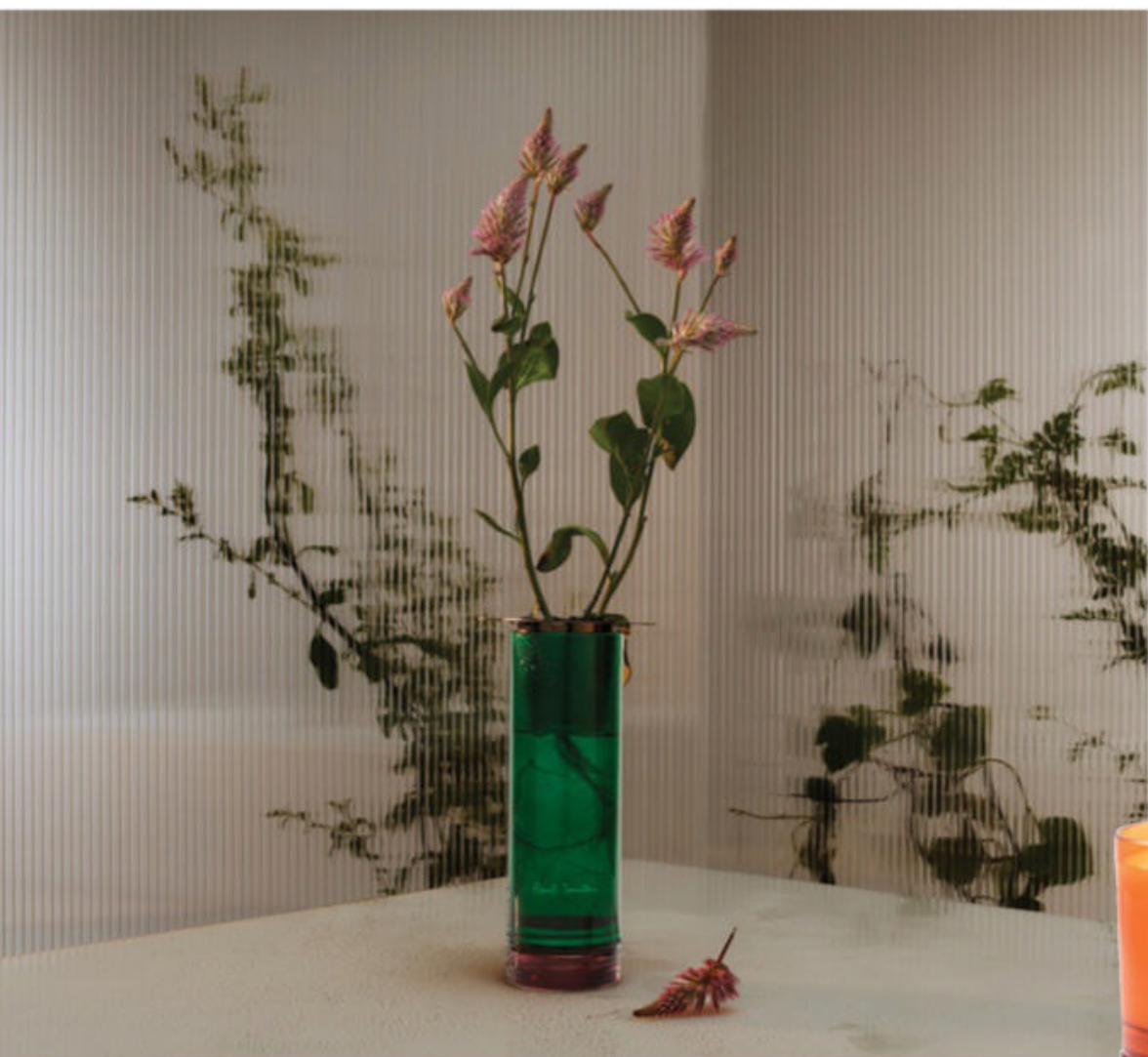


SENSORY PERCEPTION

Paul Smith's inaugural home fragrance collection is inspired by some of the British designer's most treasured memories and harnesses his predilection for bold colour. The series of collectable, reusable candles and diffusers in four scents include Botanist, a homage to

Smith's first Nottingham shop; Bookworm, a scent which evokes libraries; Early Bird, recreating the scent of rain falling on wet pavements and Daydreamer, a fragrance inspired by Smith's long summer holidays.

Crafted by two IFF (International Flavors and Fragrances) perfumers, Céline Barel and Meabh McCurtin, the scents comprise fine natural oils sourced from LMR Natural (Laboratoire Monique Remy), one of the world's most renowned purveyors of raw materials to the world's best perfumers. Available from *Paul Smith Pavilion KL*



ONE TO KNOW

Locus Standi

Gibert & Tan's striking new office for a law firm expresses its inherent values

By Jennifer Choo. Photography by Lawrence Choo



Located in Damansara Heights, Gibert & Tan designed a unique building for a law firm based on their work process. Nicknamed 181 Chambers, the project involved reusing a partially demolished 40-year-old house that was then expanded by 50 per cent of its original size.

The newly completed expanse of red brickwork unites the existing and new building sections while offering protection from direct sunlight. Large glazed surfaces on both sides of the building open up to a series of pocket gardens allowing ample natural daylight and cross ventilation to the interiors.

To ensure the office would align with the firm's working culture, the design team worked closely with the senior partners. Private offices were still provided for along with spaces that encourage collaboration.

With this in mind, the main idea has been the integration of 'breakaway' spaces - such as indoor 'lounges' or outdoor spaces to provide alternative work settings while promoting well-being. These are located in continuation with numerous pocket gardens, as well as simultaneously extending offices and meeting rooms..



This page, clockwise from top: The monolithic red brick facade; pocket gardens are dotted throughout the office; the spiral staircase in the office library

Opposite page: Generous overhangs help with sunshading



The piece de resistance of the building is the library which has traditionally been the pride of any law office. Here, the library is the central element in the organisation of the building, and the first visible element visitors see. To this end, the two-storey library connects the office functionally and visually, via a spiral staircase

that leads clients to a private meeting room on the upper floor.

The interiors are deliberately sober and minimalist. Studio Supereka oversaw the selection and design of woodwork, artwork and furniture, ensuring every aspect of 181 Chambers expresses the firm's inherent values.



Life Elevated: Beyond Extraordinary

Jendela Residences @ KLGCC Resort offers modern sustainability-led resort living in the city's most coveted address

What sets a property apart is crucial in today's crowded property market. Nowadays, what defines a luxury home and address goes beyond just the physical. It must be a holistic relationship between the residents and their surroundings and a persevering intention in providing and maintaining an elevated lifestyle experience.

These considerations were top of mind when Sime Darby Property Bhd conceptualised Jendela Residences at KLGCC Resort. This is a once-in-a-lifetime address, a combination of luxury homes built upon a multiple award-winning golf course and surrounded by nature.

CURATED CONVENIENCE

While Jendela Residences offers an enviable lifestyle within KLGCC Resort, the finest in the city is at hand if residents wish to venture further afield. Its strategic location within the affluent neighbourhoods

of Damansara Heights, Mont Kiara, Bangsar, and TTDI ensures distinguished neighbours. Hospitals, renowned international schools, MRT stations, and premium lifestyle malls like Bangsar Shopping Centre and Bangsar Village complement this lifestyle. This is further enhanced by being within close reach of the city centre and a short drive to KL Sentral with convenient access to major highways like Federal Highway, LDP, NKVE and Sprint Highway.

CRAFTED WITH CARE

Inspired by intricate layers of the Malaysian Songket, homes at Jendela Residences are designed to reflect the highest aesthetics and build quality standards. It is accompanied by generous interiors that are key to offering freedom of movement, function and design expression. This echoes the concept of spaciousness reflected

in the Residences surrounding environment.

Each typical floor has two wings and only four units per wing. Designed similarly to a hotel, the back-of-house (BOH) is separated from the front-of-house (FOH) for added privacy. Units feature practical layouts with expansive living and dining areas with high ceilings and extensive views.

To ensure a virus and germ-free environment for all residents, residents' lifts are fitted with touchless call/lift buttons. In common areas, access is only granted through selected automatic doors with access cards. In addition, a wide range of facilities is spread over three levels, which include: an infinity pool, pool cabana, hydro spa deck, floating hammock, jacuzzi, kiddies play pool, kiddies playland, swing daybed, herbs garden, gym, infrared sauna, yoga, sky lounge with kitchen and bar.



GOING GREEN

Sustainability is one of the key pillars of this project, with Jendela Residences being built towards being accredited by the GreenRE Gold Standard for Residential Buildings, a highly recognised green building rating system for developments in tropical climates.

Apart from using sustainable building materials, energy efficiency is an important factor for accreditation. To this end, durable and eco-friendly solar panels (which will save energy consumed annually by facilities rooms at Level 6, Level 8 and Level 41). Low E Glass for maximum energy efficiency is installed in all bedrooms, as well as common areas such as the fitness studio, yoga/pilates barn and games lounge.

Lifts in the building have touchless buttons with a standby mode and are regenerative, contributing to energy savings. Another eco-friendly feature is its green hoisting system that can reduce mechanical and electrical losses resulting in lowered CO₂ emissions. This system optimises the overall passenger flow served by four passenger lifts.

For added sustainability benefits and convenience, electrical vehicle

charging is provided with five parking spots and bicycle racks to fit mountain, road, hybrid and even step-through cruisers. on Level 1.

Facilities and amenities are sustainability thought through. Ranging from technologically advanced parasols equipped with automated and Smart capabilities to UV sterilisers implemented in

the swimming pool system as well as in the air circulation system. The sauna also uses infrared light, a heating technology that has been clinically proven to have health benefits such as detoxification. With such comprehensive sustainable features, it's no surprise that Jendela Residences was awarded the GreenRE Gold.



Clockwise from top left:
The grand lobby; units offer enviable views

Opposite page: The arrival at Jendela Residences makes a memorable first impressions

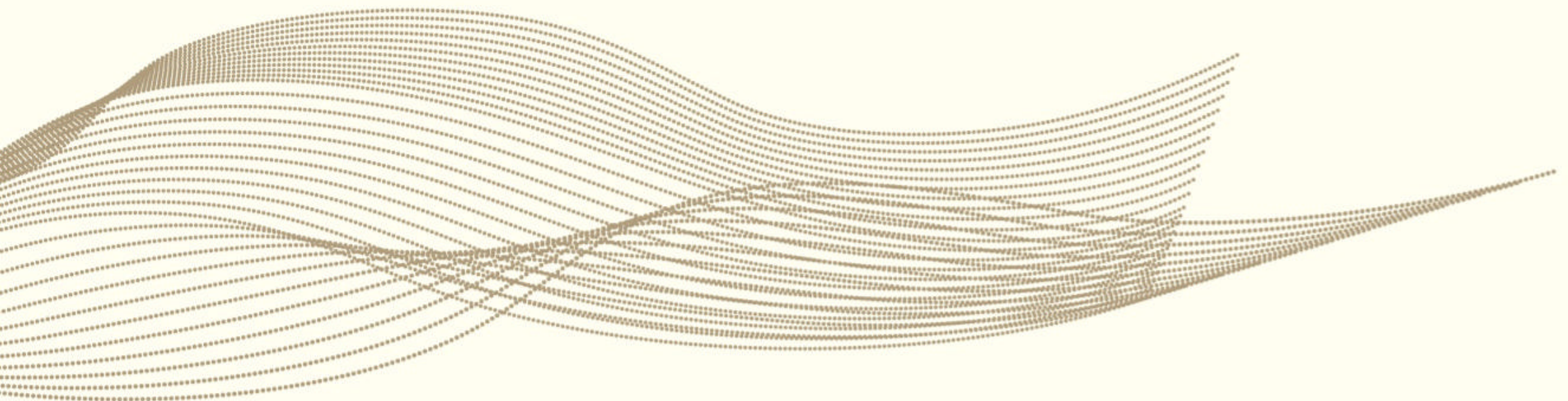


Tatler Homes

Design Awards

Asian Flair

Tatler Homes Design Awards makes its Malaysia debut this year, celebrating the work of some of the brightest minds in the industry





Good design can make the world a better place—a thoughtfully crafted interior can significantly impact how we experience a space, help uplift our mood, and improve our well-being. These are the principles that architects and interior designers alike firmly believe in, as they create soulful spaces tailored to the unique context of each project and elevate the overall concept.

We celebrate these key tenets through the Tatler Homes Design Awards. This year, the awards platform enters its seventh edition in Singapore and expands its reach regionally, with inaugural editions in Malaysia and Taiwan. In the Philippines, the awards event will herald its second year and fete a dazzling array of homegrown talents.

The inaugural Tatler Homes Design Awards - Malaysia will be held at the Royal Selangor Visitor's Centre on the 31st of May where the winners of the seven categories will be announced.

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Property



MEETING OF MINDS

These illustrious names and tastemakers will weigh in on selecting winners for the upcoming 2023 edition of the Tatler Homes Design Awards - Malaysia



ED NG

Principal and co-founder of AB Concept

Established in 1999 by Ed Ng and Terence Ngan, AB Concept is a Hong Kong-based firm that has crafted memorable spaces that combine rigour with warmth. Recent hospitality and commercial projects completed by the studio include Four Seasons Hong Kong, W Algarve in Portugal, and Paper Moon Giardino, an Italian restaurant in Milan. This year, Ng will offer his expertise as a juror for the Singapore, Taiwan and Malaysia editions of the awards ceremony.



OMAR KHAN

Founder of Omar Khan Rugs

Omar Khan creates rugs and interior design with his signature imaginative flair. The Singaporean-born Kuala Lumpur-based designer's work is informed by his multicultural background and diverse experience in visual merchandising and graphic design.

An Asia's Most Influential honouree for two years, Khan's rugs adorn private homes and luxury hotels, including St. Regis Maldives, Nobu Hotel London Shoreditch, and designer boutiques like the Christian Louboutin stores in Shanghai and Beijing. His most recent coup was designing the bedheads, rugs, and carpets at Else Kuala Lumpur.

KIAN LIEW

Head of global interior design and technical services at The Ascott

Liew leads The Ascott's team of designers based across Asia, while providing interior design consultancy services for the Singapore hospitality group's key projects that span more than 220 cities. This year, he is among the new names to join the jury panel, and will contribute to the selection of winners for both the Singapore and Malaysia editions.



BEE EU TAN

Founder, BETA Architects

Founder of BETA (BEu Tan Architect), Bee Eu Tan is an award-winning architect recognised for the adaptive reuse of heritage buildings in her native Penang and beyond. Her maiden project in Alor Setar, the Kedah Digital Library, won gold at the PAM (Pertubuhan Akitek Malaysia) Awards 2022's Adaptive Reuse Category, giving her a total of seven design awards and a third

gold at the PAM Awards in the last four years.

Other heritage buildings recently benefiting from Tan's intuitive touch include the art deco-style Penang Hill Gallery @ Edgecliff and Eythrope Bungalow. A Tatler Asia's Most Influential honouree for two years, she is also the organiser of Pechakucha Penang, a global networking event for creatives.



LAI SIEW HONG

*Interior Designer and
Co-founder, Blu Water Studio*

A multiple award-winning interior designer, Lai Siew Hong is the creative mind behind the design for numerous hospitality and F&B establishments, including luxury hotels The Edison George Town and EQ KL, Kuala Lumpur rooftop bar Sky51 and Spice Market Restaurant in Langkawi.

Long-time member and immediate past president of the Malaysian Institute of Interior Design (MIID). Lai is also the chairman of the MIID REKA Conference and an adjunct lecturer at Taylor's University Malaysia. In recognition of his accomplishments, Lai was voted Asia's Most Influential Designer at the Designer of the Year Awards in 2020 and Tatler Asia's Most Influential list in 2021.





1



2

3



4

COLLECTIONS

Outer Limits

Relax al-fresco on beautiful outdoor furniture crafted with sustainable materials



5



6



1. Carl Hansen & Søn AH604 Outdoor Lounger by Alfred Homann from Studio 216 2. Carl Hansen & Søn AH603 Outdoor Deck Chair by Alfred Homann from Studio 216 3. HAY Crate chair by Gerrit Thomas Rietveld from SMUK Living 4. B&B Italia Borea collection by Piero Lissoni from Space Furniture 5. Carl Hansen & Søn AH501 Outdoor side chair and AH901 Outdoor Dining Table by Alfred Homann from Studio 216 6. Emeco 1 Inch Reclaimed chairs by Jasper Morrison from Space Furniture 7. Verpan Cloverleaf sofa by Verner Panton from SMUK Living 8. Magis Voids rocking chair by Ron Arad from Forest Furniture 9. Kartell x Illycafé Re-chair by Antonio Citterio from Space Furniture 10. Magis Sam son chair by Konstantin Grcic from Forest Furniture 11. Gandia Blasco GBModular by Jose A. Gandia-Blasco Canales from Linds Furniture 12. Magis Broom chair by Konstantin Grcic from Forest Furniture 13. Vitra All Plastic Chair by Jasper Morrison from Vitra Kuala Lumpur





Clockwise from top left:
A bathroom application for Nebbia; Marmorio is an elegant choice for the living room; Ceppo is ideal for the exterior; Ceppo and Avorio create a warm look for the kitchen.

Classical Beauty

Inspired by Italian architecture with an eye on the future, Cosentino's Dekton Pietra Kode collection reimagines classic stones into contemporary beauty and high-performance

Captured by classical Roman buildings and the fine sculpture of Michelangelo and Bernini, the beauty of Italian stones can be nothing short of awe-inspiring. Inspired by this, Cosentino Group, the Spanish global leader in surfaces, working with renowned designer and architect Daniel Germani, is introducing Dekton Pietra Kode.

A high-performance, ultra-compact stone collection, Pietra Kode reinterprets the timeless beauty of classic Italian stones. These antique natural stones are deconstructed and then recoded into Dekton, an innovative material that offers extreme performance and unique design. Each colour breathes contemporary elegance

into the design, with the rich shades and textures creating a sensory experience beyond what the eye can see.

While the beauty of each piece is mesmerising, realising them in carbon-neutral Dekton allows the collection to be used in a virtually limitless range of indoor and outdoor applications, offering the look of Italian stone without any of its drawbacks.

A repeat collaborator of Cosentino, Germani has also designed for brands such as Gandia Blasco and Riva 1920. For Pietra Kode, the designer channelled the influence of Vicenza stone, travertine, and Milan's iconic Ceppo di Gré stone on Italian architecture over the centuries.





MATERIAL WORLD

Vicenza Kode reinterprets the classic ivory-hued Vicenza stone beloved by Renaissance architect Andrea Palladio with four colours, namely Nebbia, Avorio, Grigio and Grafite. These neutral tones, reminiscent of the earth, complement cream, wood, and taupe palettes.

Travertine Kode reinvents the stone which Rome's iconic Colosseum is made of in two hues.

Sabbia reinterprets Italian Travertine in an organic pattern, making it perfect for rustic environments while Marmorio takes cues from Travertino Navona, a natural stone found east of Rome with an elegant and lightweight iteration.

Ceppo Kode embodies the beauty of the Ceppo di Gré stone, often used in architecture in Milan, to design spaces that inspire and connect us with nature. The unmistakable pebbled pattern is ideal indoors and outdoors, with a timeless design suitable for classic, contemporary or industrial aesthetics.

For more information visit: <https://www.cosentino.com/dekton/pietrakode/>





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COLLECTIONS

State of Mind

Carve out a space made for simple pleasures by incorporating restful collections inspired by Japanese tea ceremonies and bonsai gardens

1. Sabiyu Hiwa plate, from Artifactt **2.** Christian Lacroix x Designers Guild It's Paradise Again cushion, from Romanez **3.** Meridiani René sofa by Andrea Parisio, from Marquis QSquare **4.** Poltrona Frau Water Illusion vase by Assia Karaguiozova, from Proof Living **5.** Forma Rosa Wave Form table lamp, from Galerie 5 by Sol Luminaire **6.** Ariake Lattice bench by Norm Architects, from ariakecollection.com **7.** Lodes Volum table lamps and floor lamp by Snøhetta, from Marquis QSquare, W. Atelier and Xtra **8.** Porada Callisto Mix coffee table by Carlo Ballabio, from Marquis QSquare **9.** Origin Ark lamp by Norm Architects, Pedro Eira and Emanuel Matos, from origin-made.com



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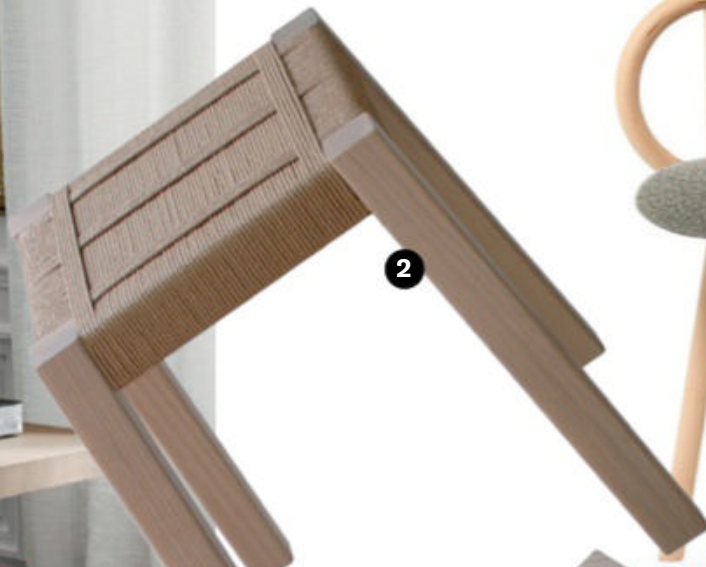
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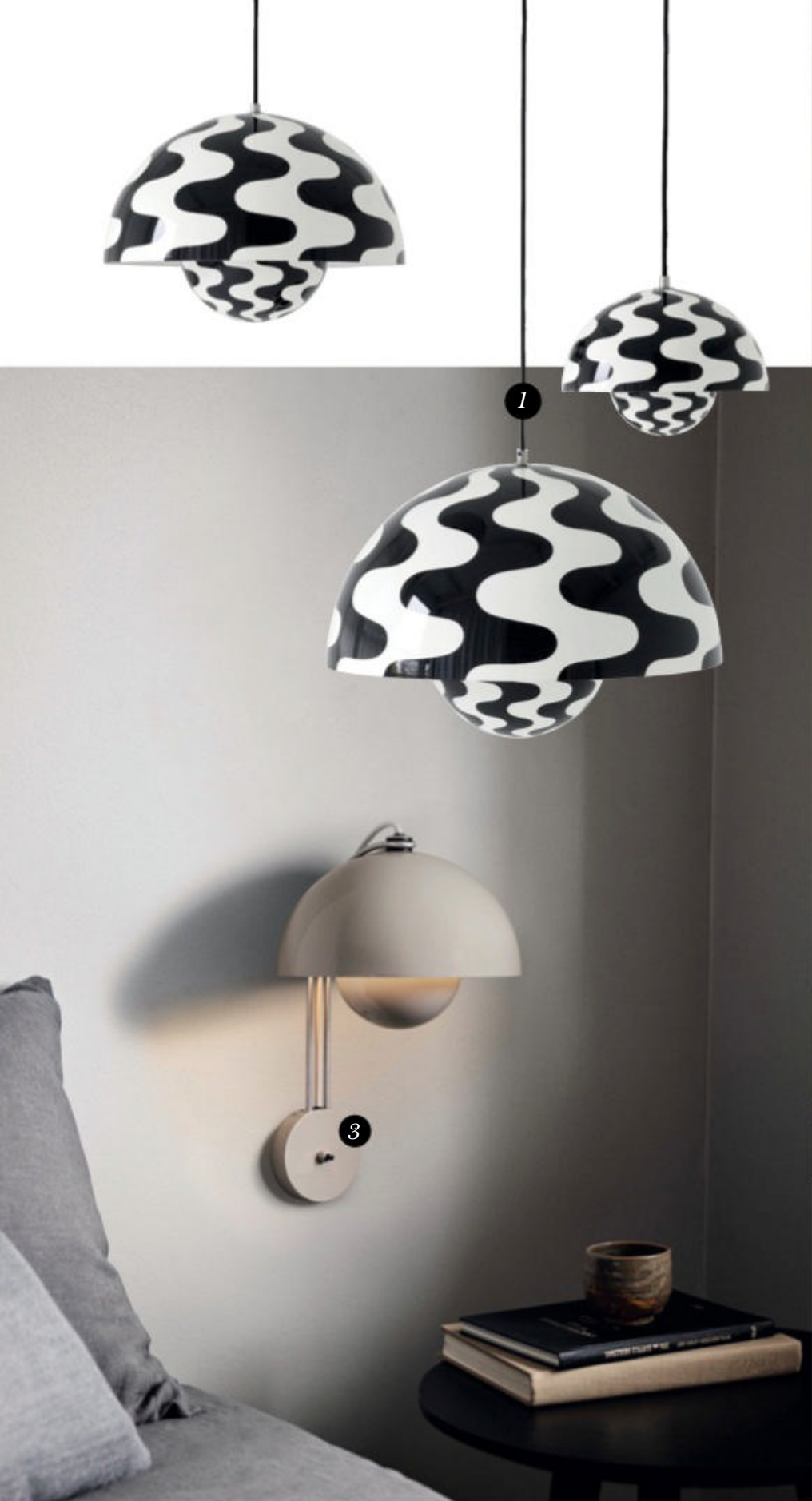
COLLECTIONS

Into the Woods

Create a soothing mood with a cosy mix of wooden furnishings to match your design scheme

1. Maxalto InToto console by Antonio Citterio, from Space Furniture 2. Origin Made The Weaver's low stools by Gabriel Tan, Maria Adelina and Carlos Barbosa, from origin-made.com 3. Very Wood Zantilam armchair by Patricia Urquiola, from verywood.it 4. Rubelli Casa Sinua coffee tables by Matteo Nunziati, from Da Vinci Lifestyle 5. Foscarini Twiggy floor lamp by Marc Sadler, from Space Furniture 6. Poltrona Frau Ren side table by Neri & Hu, from Proof Living 7. Ritzwell Jabara AV board by Shinsaku Miyamoto, from Stylecraft 8. Baxter Calix console, from Space Furniture 9. Porada Infinity dining table by Stefano Bigi, from Marquis QSquare





COLLECTION

Fine Vintage

Glow up with classic lights that are still in production today

1. &Tradition Flowerpot pendant by Verner Panton from SMUK Living **2.** Menu Collectors chandelier by Alf Svensson from SMUK Living **3.** &Tradition Flowerpot wall light by Verner Panton from SMUK Living **4.** Menu Wing floor lamp by Kenneth Bergenblad from SMUK Living **5.** Artemide Tizo desk lamp by Richard Sapper from Lightcraft **6.** Louis Poulsen PH 31/2-3 Pendant by Poul Henningsen from Vitra Kuala Lumpur **7.** Normann Copenhagen Norm 06 by Simon Karkov from SMUK Living **8.** Louis Poulsen AJ Oxford by Arne Jacobsen from Vitra Kuala Lumpur **9.** &Tradition Topan pendant by Verner Panton from SMUK Living **10.** Artek pendant lights by Alvar Aalto from Vitra Kuala Lumpur **11.** Artemide Eclisse table lamp by Vico Magistretti from Lightcraft **12.** Menu Wing table lamp by Kenneth Bergenblad from SMUK Living **13.** Verpan Reflect table lamp by Verner Panton from SMUK Living





ASK THE EXPERT

Natural Beauty

Zi Wei Wong of Supernormal Design Studio on how to create a living room inspired by nature



1. SCULPTURAL SILHOUETTE

For a coffee table, Wong picks the Tobi-Ishi table from B&B Italia by Edward Barber and Jay Osgerby. Available from Space Furniture, the simple yet sculptural table design has a statuesque appearance and pairs well with a low sofa.



“A living room inspired by nature needs to visually connect and allow dialogues between the interior and surrounding context,” says Zi Wei Wong, founder and design principal of Supernormal Design Studio.

Wong believes air and light are essential to set the stage for this: “There needs to be sensitivity when planning the windows and openings to let fresh air inside while maximising the natural light.”

Before beginning the design, Wong recommends observing the environment around the site instead of immediately installing artificial green or potted plants. “Instead, we should choose to capture and frame the surrounding nature,” he enthuses.

Citing Geoffrey Bawa’s house on 33rd Lane as an inspiration, Wong recalls how the renowned Sri Lankan architect successfully blurred boundaries between the indoors and outdoors, resulting in a delightful play between space and light.

To curate a beautiful living room experience inspired by nature, Wong concludes that there should be physical and sensory elements to be discovered from moment to moment within the interior.

2. STORY ARC

The Terminal 1 chair from B&B Italia, available at Space Furniture, is a statement piece. Designed by Jean-Marie Massaud, it features an organic form and a lightweight designed base. Wong recommends placing it at the central axis of the space, like a piece of furniture and art.





3. SMOOTH OPERATOR

“The Peobble armchair from Basicology was the first chair I designed which was featured in MIFF2019,” explains Wong. “I believe the smooth lines of this chair will work well with a large L-shape sofa.”



4. LET THERE BE LIGHT

A sofa anchors a space, and Antonio Citterio’s B&B Italia Atoll sofa, available from Space Furniture, is ideal. “Slim and with lightweight die-cast supports and frame, it creates a seamless connection with the space beyond,” states Wong. “I also love the combination of the leather bolster and straps with fabric.”

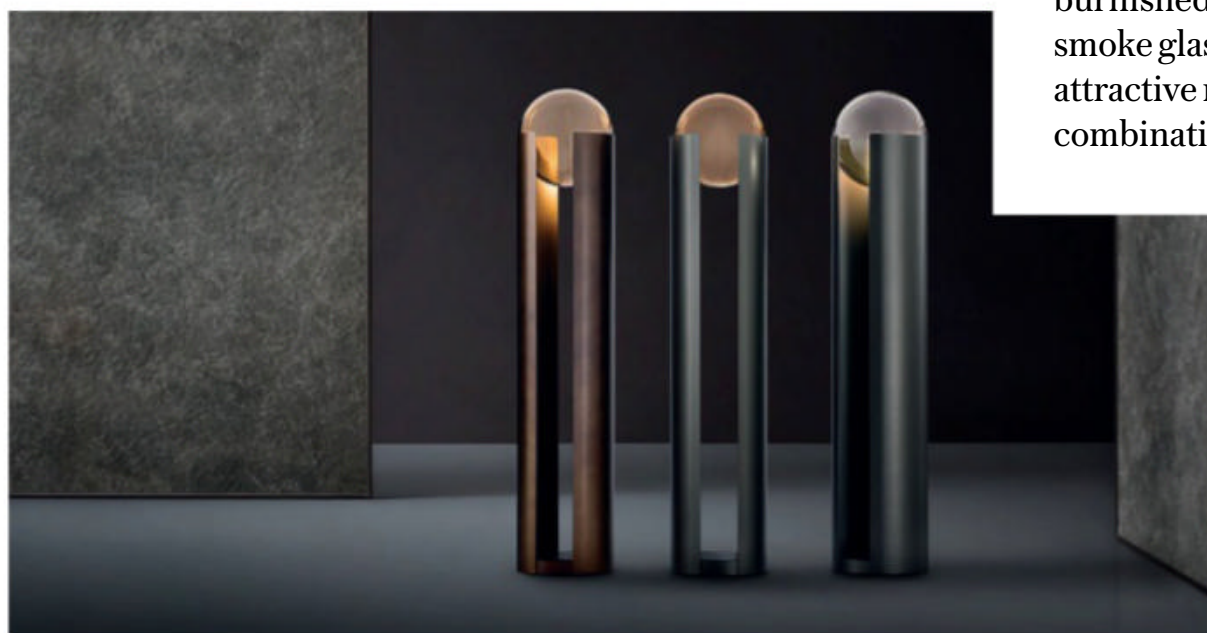


5. IN BLOOM

The Bloom Botanica from Georg Jensen, available from Studio 216, looks lovely, empty, or filled with flowers. Designed by Helle Damkjær, Wong loves its minimal and organic form and suggests placing this mirror polished stainless steel vase on a side table.

6. SOFT GLOW

To add some light to the space, Wong’s pick is the Softwing floor lamp from Natevo, designed by Carlo Colombo: “This sculptural light is a beautiful balance of stability and lightness. In addition, the matt burnished stand and smoke glass is an attractive material combination.”





Hearth and Craft

Villeroy & Boch celebrates 275 years of creating homes

A premium brand with a global reputation, Villeroy & Boch has come a long way from its beginnings as a small craft business founded in 1748. Today, Villeroy & Boch has evolved from a production-oriented ceramicist to a comprehensive lifestyle provider that uses its products to design and shape its customers' homes worldwide. 2023 marks the heritage brand's 275th year, a remarkable journey of continued renewal and innovation.

CREATING HOMES

Since 1748, Villeroy & Boch has been creating high-quality porcelain and contributed to the democratisation of the bathroom through their innovative products. This was achieved by imbuing their products with good design, which is simultaneously revolutionary yet timeless - and always with what it

takes to become a classic.

Indeed the bathroom has long gone from just fulfilling its basic function to becoming a feel-good oasis. Villeroy & Boch have been responsible for furthering this with a diverse product range for the bathroom that doesn't just make the bathroom more functional but more beautiful as well.

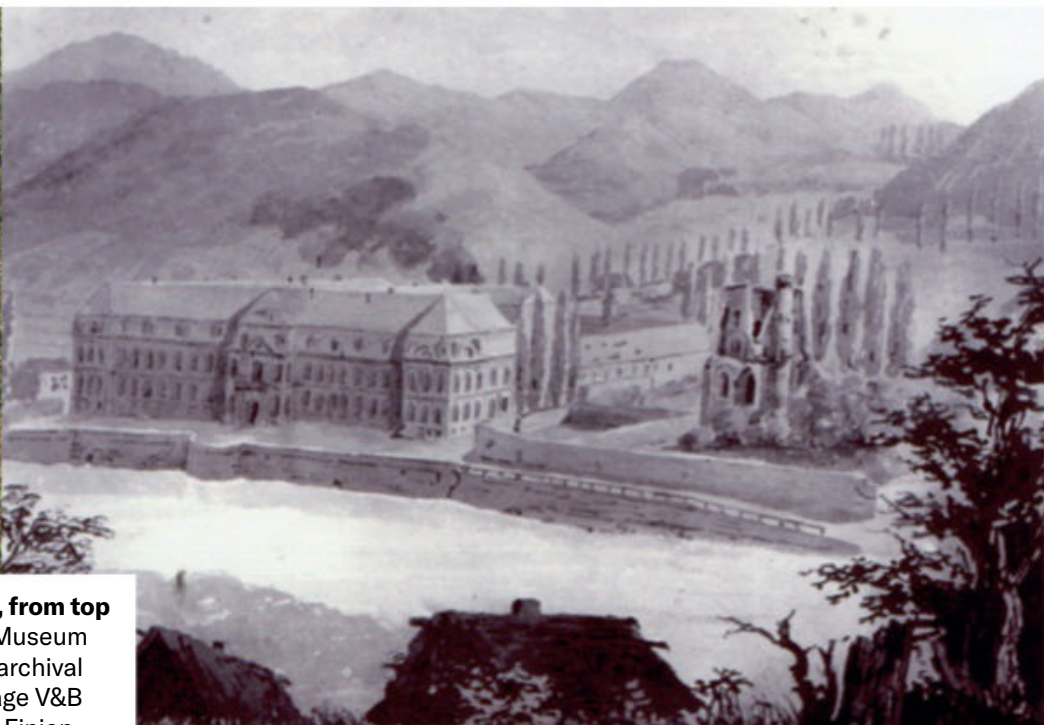
Often collaborating with world-renown designers, shape, texture and colour are used to create a nearly unlimited number of permutations for their clientele. At the same time, an expanding portfolio of furniture and accessories completes the design language. Villeroy & Boch's Finion range is a case in point. Here pure design meets sophisticated technology using premium materials such as TitanCeram ceramic to create a truly individualistic bathroom.

The always-evolving Subway range is another prime example. Now in its third iteration, Subway 3.0 was designed to future-proof the family bathroom with the patent-pending TwistFlush toilet that saves water with every flush, long-lasting materials, smart functions and timelessly beautiful design.

Further innovations throughout Villeroy & Boch's Bathroom and Wellness range include using a unique material like Quaryl. Robust, durable yet non-porous and smooth with a tactile quality, this exclusive material sets new standards in product design.

LANDMARK YEAR

Villeroy & Boch's Bathroom & Wellness division will present special product highlights to celebrate this anniversary year. Hommage to Hommage is a new



This page, from top left: V&B Museum Mettlach; archival print; vintage V&B bathroom; Finion collection

edition of the successful bathroom collection, whose traditional Victorian forms are shown in Nero, a trendy new colour.

Villeroy & Boch will be presenting a firework of innovations at ISH 2023, the World's Leading Trade Fair for Water, Heating, and Air, which will take place in Frankfurt am Main from 13 to 17 March 2023. The exhibition includes the new Antao bathroom collection, which was developed in collaboration with the designer duo, Kaschkasch. Villeroy & Boch will also be presenting a new range of fittings that perfectly matches all of its collections and make bathroom planning much easier.

Opposite page: Subway collection



To enter the world of Villeroy & Boch, visit:

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A NEW THREAD

Narrative-driven concepts, coupled with a nurturing spirit and a passion for nature guide the popular colour and fabric choices for home interiors—take a cue from these decor trends in the year ahead

Tatler
Homes
Scene

38 *By Michele Koh Morollo*





This page, clockwise from top left: Catch a Glimpse, a cotton and polyester-blend textile with a textured finish from Jab Anstoetz, available at P5; Taiga fabric from the Nobilis Icons Spring 2022 collection, available at Cetec; the Igloo fabric from Nobilis is a pure wool velvet that is also fire-resistant; Hong Kong-based designer Iman El Zaky employs colour-blocked blue tones to soothing effect in a bedroom; this colour-blocked bathroom by Hong Kong design firm Lim + Lu matches a speckled terrazzo finish with a warm terracotta hue

Opposite page: The Kvadrat Steelcut collection comprises textiles in vibrant hues created in collaboration with colour adviser Giulio Ridolfo

As the world slowly emerges from its post-pandemic hibernation, we'll see more soft and soothing colours being used in home interiors. Gentle colours inspired by nature and a spirit of nurturance will find their way into more abodes, coupled with a heightened sense of environmental consciousness that will guide our fabric choices.

There will be a shift in focus from what's in vogue to what feels right. In 2023, homeowners and designers will break free from convention, moving away from the typical pre-pandemic leanings towards minimalism to embrace warmer colours and materials that allow them to truly express their unique personalities, tastes and lifestyles. This means playing around with darker palettes and denser fabrics, and exploring all the possibilities of different texture and colour combinations. Here, we list these and more notable trends to watch for your next renovation.

1. MATERIAL: HEAVY FABRICS

Thicker, heavier fabrics will become more popular—when applied to wall panels and curtains, these options can also improve acoustic performance in a room. Kvadrat's new Steelcut collection is one such notable range; it features an innovative three-dimensional construction by textile designer Frans Dijkmeijer that is durable and expresses the nuances of the hues picked by colour adviser Giulio Ridolfo.

Winnie Heimgartner-Wong, managing director of upholstery purveyor Cetec, suggests using boucle or

chenille for upholstery, and wool or gingham for Roman blinds. "The fluffier look and feel of denser fabrics can create a cosy, homely atmosphere that encourages relaxation and nesting at home," she says. The handmade finish of such heavier fabrics makes them desirable, too. "Eye-catching fabrics like Catch a Glimpse from Jab Anstoetz feature an authentic 'handmade' look that plays with different natural textures and yarns," says Eike Poertner, vice-president for international contract division at Jab Anstoetz.



2. STYLE: COLOUR BLOCKING

Forget about playing it safe: 2023 is all about going bold with brighter hues. Hong Kong-based interior designer Iman El Zaky recommends giving colour blocking a try: it's essentially about using contrasting but complementary colours to set a mood. "Using blocks of colours on walls or surfaces is a fabulous way to bring energy to a space."

El Zaky suggests using your favourite hue as the main colour, then selecting shades that contrast yet harmonise with that primary shade. "The complementary colours can be introduced to the interiors in the form of painted walls, or in less obvious ways such as with a decorative rug, a cushion or a throw. You can really transform a space by painting your ceiling as part of a colour block concept," she says.

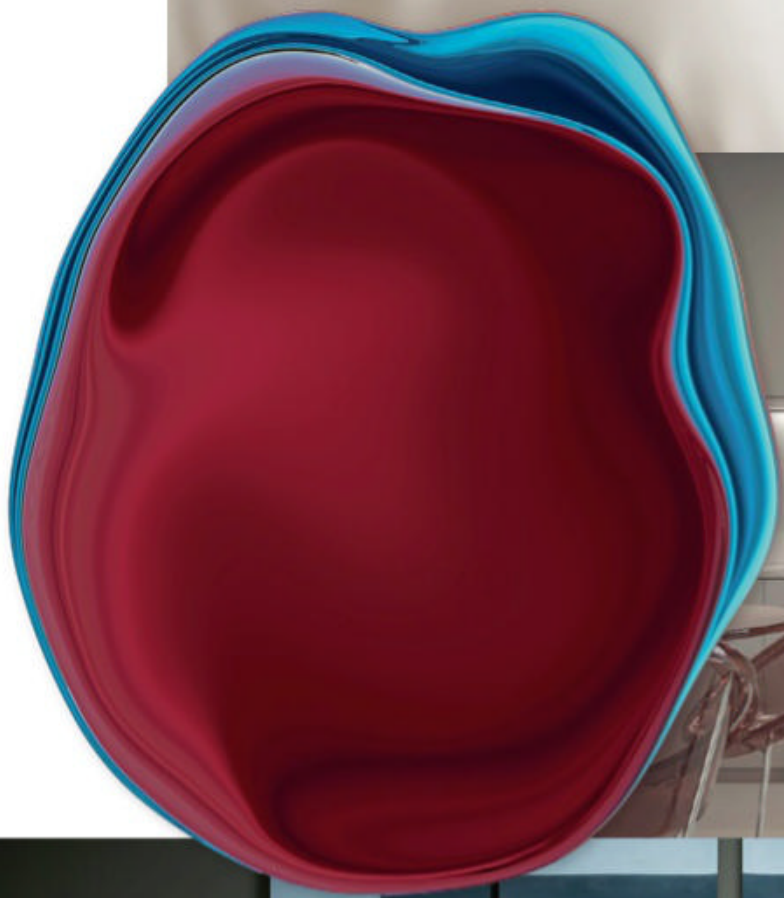




3. COLOUR: RUBY REIGN

For homeowners seeking a more dramatic look, rich and vibrant hues like Viva Magenta, Pantone's Colour of the Year, would be their shade of choice. This colour is a joyous tone inspired by carmine red, a dye used widely in food and cosmetics.

Use this standout hue on accent pieces to instantly invigorate a nook of your home, or be bold and apply the vivacious tone to a feature wall or kitchen cabinetry to add a burst of colour to a subdued neutral scheme.



This page, clockwise from top: Ultrafabrics will feature Viva Magenta on selected upholstery collections, and on Volar Bio, a fabric made with renewable materials; LG's colour-changing MoodUp fridge can be customised in as many as 23 hues, including Viva Magenta; furnishings in similar red tones include this B&B Italia Le Bambole armchair by Mario Bellini, the Baxter Viktor sofa by Draga & Aurel, and the Moooli Mixing Pixels Heart Donut rug by Ruben de Haas, all available at Space Furniture





4. COLOURS: SOFT SHADES

Gentle hues that speak of nurturance and self-care will take centre stage in 2023. WGSN teamed up with colour experts Coloro to pick their 2023 Colour of the Year, Digital Lavender. Clare Smith, colour strategist at WGSN, describes it as a sensorial shade that connects to well-being and optimism: "Digital Lavender signifies [the] stability, serenity and digital escapism that so many of us have built into our recuperative rituals to both protect and improve our mental health in challenging times."

Smith adds that this hue is ideal for bedrooms and

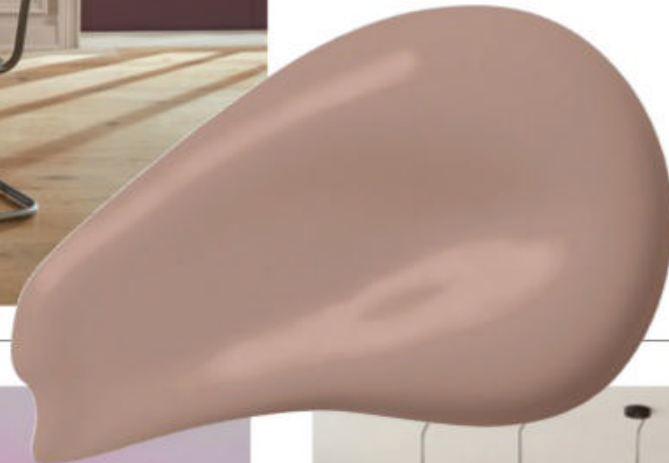


bathrooms, and also works well in spaces with tech accessories. "This colour reflects a more hopeful view of the future, with healing rituals and soft, therapeutic colours being key," she says.

American paint brand Sherwin-Williams chose Redend Point as its Colour of the Year. "Two major themes we wanted the 2023 Colour of the Year to reflect were warmth and empathy. This beautiful blush-beige hue reflects the trend

of neutral tones warming up and people embracing earthy elements," says Sue Wadden, director of colour marketing at Sherwin-Williams.

This versatile hue is a good accent colour for bathrooms and dressing rooms; spaces that are dedicated to beauty and self-care routines. "For example, you could use it on small accessories, or even on a ceiling," says Wadden.



5. STYLE: GO MAXIMALIST

Forget about playing it safe and embrace maximalism—get as creative as you want when designing a home that tells your own personal story. You can achieve a bold look by layering a space with different materials and colours, or introducing interesting patterned fabrics and wall designs in your home.

"I think people are looking for excitement in the post-pandemic era. Clients are more willing to

explore more adventurous patterns and colours, and ways to make their home feel more vibrant and alive," says Elaine Lu of Hong Kong-based design studio Lim + Lu.

Jeremy Tay, founder and director of Singapore-based firm Prestige Global Designs, agrees. "When executed well, a dark and moody colour scheme can result in sophisticated spaces that can really make a powerful impression," he says.

This page, clockwise from top left: Featured in this dining room is Redend Point, the Sherwin-Williams Colour of the Year; WGSN picked Digital Lavender as its top hue for 2023; Lim + Lu designed Yung's Bistro with bold monochromatic flooring and subway tiles in emerald tones on the wall; this meeting room crafted by Prestige Global Designs features a striking mural and an eye-catching neon slogan

Tatler Homes

Scene

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6. TRIMMINGS: FUN FACTOR

Using patterned trims and tassels is a good way to add a personalised touch to your decor. These work very well with heavy fabrics and can complement boho-chic interior schemes.

“There are many different options you can use, from trimmings with subtle neutral colours and classical patterns, to pieces with bold and modern geometric patterns and opulent velvet fabrics,” says Heimgartner-Wong. Bring a touch of nature into your home with Zimmer + Rohde’s Arboretum trim collection from Travers (left), available at Cetec. Inspired by the beauty of nature, this garden-themed collection was created using a variety of techniques, including embroidery and block printing.

7. MATERIAL: SUSTAINABLE WEAVES

Environmentally conscious textiles made with recycled materials will become more popular in the year ahead. Christina Lee, Kvadrat’s country director for Singapore, observes that more designers and homeowners are choosing sustainable fabrics.

“Consumers are very conscious in their choices and long-lasting products of high quality are very much in demand,” says Lee. “We can definitely feel there is a momentum in terms of sustainability due to the longevity of our products

as well as the aesthetic and sustainable properties of the textiles.”

In response to this demand, Kvadrat has launched fabrics such as Really, a material made from discarded t-shirts and other upcycled fabrics. It’s ideal for use on acoustic panels, soft furnishings and tabletop surfaces. Another top pick is Re-wool (pictured below), a Kvadrat fabric made using 45 per cent recycled wool collected from scraps produced by the brand’s UK-based yarn spinners.





8. COLOUR: INTO THE WOODS

Nature-inspired tones will remain popular. These include Wild Wonder, a muted yellow hue selected as AkzoNobel's Colour of the Year.

"It reflects the different ways that nature teaches and nurtures us," says Heleen van Gent, creative director of AkzoNobel's Global Aesthetic Centre. "We're recognising nature as the source of everything in our lives, and re-evaluating our relationship with the natural world. As people search for support, connection,

inspiration and balance in the world today, they're diving into the wonders of the natural world to find it."

This leaning towards natural hues is reflected in Nippon Paint's colour selection as well. Its top shade for 2023 is Dark Green, a deep emerald hue that is intended to convey signs of regeneration and life, while promoting mindfulness and creativity. It draws its verdant influences from such sources as moss growing on rocks, as well as succulents and cacti thriving in a desert environment.

This page: Iman El Zeky creates a cocooning atmosphere with an earthy palette; Dark Green, the Nippon Paint Colour of the Year, is among the trending nature-inspired hues; AkzoNobel picked Wild Wonder as its key shade for 2023

Opposite page, clockwise from top: Travers' Arboretum collection of trimmings and the Shoebill Re fabric from Hodsoll McKenzie comprising European linen and recycled cotton, both available from Cetec; Kvadrat's Re-wool upholstery fabric collection



The elegantly zen lobby of Garrya Nijo Castle in Kyoto. **Opposite page:** Okra Candles Michelle and Erik Rust's fresh take on candlemaking

Discover heritage projects in Malaysia and Kyoto and new women-led studios to watch

Tatler

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INTERVIEW

Amazing Grace

Multi-award-winning architect Bee Eu Tan is breathing new life and adding her intuitive touch to heritage buildings in Malaysia's northern region *By Jennifer Choo*

Adaptive reuse projects are tricky propositions, they require technical know-how, aesthetic nous and intuition to be realised successfully. Bee Eu Tan, the founder of BETA (BEu Tan Architect), has combined the three with aplomb with projects such as Penang Digital Library, Penang Harmony Centre and Kedah Digital Library, to name but a few.

The Penang Digital Library, a transformation of the Penang Free School's headmaster's quarters, was awarded the Alteration and Addition Category gold medal at the PAM 2019, making Tan's company, BETA, the youngest practice to win a top prize.

Another PAM gold medal followed this in the Adaptive Reuse Category for the redesign of Harmony Centre - Penang's first interfaith communal building and, most recently, the Kedah Digital Library, which won gold at the PAM (Pertubuhan Akitek Malaysia) Awards 2022's Adaptive Reuse Category, giving her a total of seven design awards in the last four years.

However, the Penang native started her career in Singapore and Kuala Lumpur before returning to Penang to start her own practice. Tatler Homes speaks to Tan about her remarkable trajectory

and how adaptive reuse projects have enriched her love for honest architecture.

How did you come to work on adaptive reuse projects?

Returning from Singapore, I was highly skilled in commercial work and large mix-development schemes. When I first started my practice, I was game for any challenge. As a nobody, we can't be choosy.

Our first was Penang Institute's adaptive reuse of a bungalow into an office space. The subsequent projects fell into place quite organically. In some of the talks I've given, I confessed that I only committed to delivering good honest design. It's as if the path of adaptive reuse chose me; all I did was follow my intuition.



Clockwise from left: Penang Digital Library; the adapted facade of the Kedah Digital Library; Bee Eu Tan, founder of BETA Architect



What was it like coming from a more conventional architectural career to adaptive reuse?

A roller-coaster ride. I've learned a lot of lessons in my journey of transforming eight adaptive reuse projects to date. Each adaptive reuse project brings a new set of constraints. Each with its own set of problems waiting to be solved and surprises waiting to be discovered. Each transformation is unique; it is almost impossible to use a standard template to repeat. Each project is a never-ending list of problems to solve.

Adaptive reuse has taught me the importance of empathy, patience, forgivingness, grit and a lot of good faith in pursuing our initial concept ideas.

Architects are essentially problem solvers. Hence, I advise young architects to always embrace problems instead of fearing them. Working on adaptive reuse demands us to be resilient with a

never-say-die attitude because the struggle and site problems can be overwhelming.

How different is your approach when tackling an adaptive reuse project?

Every architectural project is unique, with its own context and sense of place. Understanding context is key, whether it's new or repurposing an old building. The most significant difference with adaptive reuse projects is that we spend more time at the site to understand the existing buildings thoroughly before an intervention is drawn up in the office. Even problems at-site are often solved on-site with close communication with builders.

I am also very intuitive in each adaptive reuse project. Most major concepts are dreamed up at the site during the initial site visits by profound observations and 'listening' to what the old building tells me.

As I meander through the old house, my mind forms an idea of how the transformed space would look. I am a daydreamer, so I imagine all my building forms in my mind before they're drawn on paper.

Quite unexpectedly, I find adaptive reuse very rewarding. Not

in terms of financial fees gain but in the transformational impacts from old to new. That extremely difficult journey seems to yield more satisfaction when accomplished. It's also heart-warming to hear memories from elderly patrons when they visit the revived old





buildings. Adaptive reuse is, after all, stories to tell our grandchildren.

What is the most challenging aspect of adaptive reuse projects?

Budget, structural constraints and mindset. Adaptive reuse is often misconstrued as a simple renovation. Hence, usually, it is not blessed with a big budget.

Structural integrity is crucial because most old buildings are adapted to cater larger capacity of visitors. The builder mindset is also an essential criteria, adaptive reuse demands a sensitive Builder who appreciates the art and commits to careful adaptation on site.

What are your thoughts on adaptive reuse in Penang and Malaysia?

In Penang and Malaysia, we're seeing a growing acceptance of the adaptive reuse approach in repurposing old buildings amongst owners, policymakers, and architects. That old can be gold. Instead of demolishing, we now consider the advantages of giving old buildings a second life.

Yet, many do not fully appreciate the true complexity of adaptive reuse. It is still deemed an easy renovation job which includes just a few quick fixes. This led to mediocre design fees, driving many large architectural firms away from taking



Clockwise from lower left: Penang Hill Gallery @ Edgecliff; Eythrope Bungalow, Penang Hill; Penang Harmony Centre; GWTHI Office; Penang Harmony Centre



up adaptive reuse projects.

The reality is that adaptive reuse is one of the toughest to execute compared to designing new. You see, when you start afresh a new project on a blank canvas, you have no constraints on the shell and services of the past buildings.

Adaptive reuse requires a strong skill and knowledge of structure and building services to mitigate the interventions. In addition, it demands the art of recognising the potential of each old building and pairing a new concept with an existing layout. In my past interviews, I have said that adaptive reuse is akin to nerve surgery because it demands a high level of attention to detail. You repair the damaged and carefully preserve the rest.

After completing several adaptive reuse transformations, I see the need to increase awareness by writing and giving talks to break the myth and help elevate the value of adaptive reuse as a sustainable approach.

What inspires you?

Nature inspires me. The spectrum of lines, forms, colours, sizes, shapes and textures in our natural environment never fails to inspire me. In Penang, we're blessed with blue skies, hills, forests, old trees, rivers, beaches, and the sea.

Travel inspires me too. Nothing

beats getting out of the box, out of your comfort zone. The art of getting away helps clear the frustrations and the mud in the mind.

Music, movies, painting, sculpture, fashion, photography, food, and anything else that is creative in nature. This is why I continue running PechaKucha events because it is my own source of inspiration. But, of course, good coffee is my fastest fix of inspiration!

Who inspires you?

Zaha Hadid was my idol during my formative years in Architecture School. I was inspired by her ferocity

in championing her own ideas and her own principles. Moreover, being a female architect, her pursuit of breaking conventions struck a deep chord in me.

Tadao Ando's transformation story from boxer to architect also inspired me greatly. His architecture demonstrated his intuitive composition of forms, dramatic play of light and shadow and honesty in materials.

Ideas and inspirations come to me when I am not thinking about them. So, whenever I find myself in a rut, I gravitate to all these sources of inspiration.





The Look of Lux

Mieux Design's bespoke design celebrates their client's individualism with luxury design

The word “mieux” means best in French, and when Mieux Design was established by Isaac Lim and Sheila Chang, the name they chose indicated the kind of design and experience they wanted to deliver.

Founded in 2018, the duo noticed a need for more creativity in the interior design market and believed they could fill that gap with more interesting designs for residential and commercial projects.

Partners in work as in life, the couple's talents created the ideal synergy. Lim, an architecture graduate, had a flair for marketing, while Chang, an interior designer, was the creative engine who specialised in high-end commercial projects. Together they started building a portfolio of projects espousing their ideals of luxury, functionality and comfort.

“Great design is all about details which offer a good experience and is user friendly. However, it needs to have precision as well. By that, I mean it needs to cater to the client's needs,” explains Lim.

Indeed, in a crowded marketplace, this commitment to delivering personalised solutions and intuiting what a client needs precisely sets Mieux Design apart. “Our client base is in the mid-to-high range, and we understand what our clients want and need,” states Lim. “Most of our clients are busy, successful businessmen who let us handle projects from A to Z and enjoy the finished results when they are handed their keys.”

While the results seem effortless, Lim explains that much preparation and research are done before the design work starts. “The

key to getting the design right is understanding the client, so our pre-design prep is thorough. We start with interviewing the client, which can take up to two hours,” Lim says. “From this, we learn what they want and figure out what they need even though they might not realise it. For example, if the client has small kids, they may not realise that their homes must be child-proof and evolve as they grow up.”

Besides interviewing the client, Lim is emphatic about the importance of visiting the site as part of their pre-design prep: “We always believe in designing within context. Whether the quality of the natural





Clockwise from top left:
A chic living room in Setia Eco Glades; the grand staircase; a decadent dining and bar area, Eco Majestic; a zen tea area, Taman Danau Desa



Opposite page, from top:
The dining area marrying classical and modern, Tropical Aman bungalow; Sheila Chang and Isaac Lim, founders of Mieux Design



light or the natural surroundings, our designs must interact and collaborate with the outside of the property to match the inside space.”

While Mieux Design is committed to delivering a home that suits a client’s purposes, the designers do not believe in blindly acquiescing to a client’s every whim. “Sometimes the effect a client wants may not be achievable by the kind of things they like, which is where we come in,” muses Lim. “For example, when a client says they want an elegant and classy home, but their tastes veer towards the gaudy, we show them examples of how spaces can be subtle yet luxurious. Moreover, our reputation as a luxury design firm is at stake, so the results must reflect our ethos.”

As for working in the luxury interior design segment successfully, Mieux Design’s award-winning portfolio of projects speaks for itself. “Affluent clients want a home which feels special and wows visitors, which sets our work apart,” says Lim. “Ultimately, our designs enhance the owner’s personality or character, a home which is entirely unique to them.”

*For more information, contact
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www.mieuxdesign.com.my*



THE NEW WAVE

Feminine, eco-friendly and timeless—these were some of the prevailing styles and qualities seen at the recent Maison&Objet fair in Paris. We highlight the intriguing work of some of the women-led studios to watch

Tatler
Homes
Style

52 *By Maria Chiara Antonini*

As the world eases back into travelling again, international design fairs have also returned with a splash. The Maison&Objet (M&O) fair in Paris made a great comeback this year, with over 2,000 design companies from 60 different countries launching and debuting new products. Held from 18 to 23 January this year, the French trade fair offered a vibrant array of novelties ranging from furnishings and lighting to tableware and accessories to entice designers and house-proud visitors alike.

The leitmotif for this edition of the event was sustainability: designers and manufacturers are becoming more mindful of their environmental impact, and aim to reduce the carbon footprint of their firms by promoting more sustainable methods of production. This eco-conscious approach is evident in the work of the women creators behind four of such design firms. While these studios may originate from different countries and cultural backgrounds, and showcase a diverse mix of styles and material choices, they all tap into a common ecologically minded ethos that aims to minimise waste in their production processes, harness locally derived resources and support homegrown artisans where possible.

Here, the founders of these firms tell us more about their chosen creative path and philosophy, and how they navigate the challenges of their dual roles as both designers and creative entrepreneurs.

IMAGES COURTESY OF RESPECTIVE STUDIOS

Threads of Time

Up-and-coming rug brand Marmi relishes bridging its cross-cultural influences while using ethically sourced materials and supporting local craft traditions

When a studio is based in two very different cities, its creative approach can consequently be both versatile and eclectic. Such is true of Marmi, a rug brand founded in 2022 by two friends: Asli Smith, a multidisciplinary designer based between in Istanbul and New York, and Sirin Aysan, an award-winning storyteller who lives in Los Angeles.

Marmi creates contemporary rugs inspired by the myths, art and history of Asia Minor cultures. Each rug is crafted by artisans in Turkey, the country in which Smith and Aysan grew up.



What inspired your decision to start Marmi?

Sirin and I have been talking about opening up a studio since before the pandemic. The stars finally aligned, and we started our company last summer. We both share a mutual love of artisanal rugs and textiles, and we started our company with the desire to work with artisans in our homeland, Turkey, and to create unique collections that express rug design as an art form.

Describe your design philosophy.

We try to take a holistic approach, using long-lasting, sustainable materials in harmony with environmental matters [to us]. Inspiration can come from a conversation, a person, a film, or a song; I'm a curious person, and it helps.

Which techniques are you most interested in right now?

I've a serious interest in dyes; I'm interested in chemical-free, sustainable dyeing practices. I would like to learn more about making dyes from bacteria, and possibly use them in my work. I've experimented with a lot of wool dyeing in the past years, as the material takes up dye beautifully. It's one of the oldest textile fibres used by humanity, and is 100 per cent biodegradable, natural and renewable.

For our rugs, we prioritise locally and ethically sourced materials from Turkey. We use materials that feature natural fibres, such as wool and Tencel, which are biodegradable and renewable. We work with local artisans and love the collaborative process of working with dyers and weavers.

"I always thought I was going to be a painter; honestly, I'm not sure how I ended up as a designer. But I love being a designer. I love the problem solving and playtime that come along with it," quips Smith. That said, her artistic background is evident in her drawing-like rug designs, which emphasise their natural influences.

"For Marmi, we would like to keep creating collections that tell a story and reflect our appreciation of natural colours, materials and textures," says Smith. What are the future plans for their fledgling firm and how do they manage to make their cross-country collaboration work? Smith tells us more.

This spread: Presented at the recent M&O fair, these rugs are from Marmi's new collection, Ki, which means "earth" in the Sumerian language, and draw inspiration from Mesopotamian culture and aesthetics; Asli Smith, co-founder of Marmi

Shape of Things

Vancouver-based studio Molo creates shapeshifting furnishings and partitions that offer the ultimate flexibility in organising and decorating your spaces

Molo's compact yet expandable structures have been used everywhere, from galleries to shops and homes; these clever designs have also joined the permanent collection of the MoMA museum in New York.

These versatile pieces are the brainchild of Vancouver-based couple Stephanie Forsythe and Todd MacAllen, who founded their studio in 2003. The design and production practice makes its focus all about projects that create flexible spaces and range in size from tea sets to museum exhibits. "My partner Todd and I have been obsessed with flexible structures for more than 20 years," says Forsythe. "Our designs evolve from ideas about place-making and elevating the experience of daily activities."

Sustainability is a cause that the couple are deeply passionate about. "The two biggest gifts that Canada has given me as a designer, are an open mind and the profound beauty of natural landscapes. Spending time in the forest and on the ocean makes me feel more alive and compelled to protect these precious environments," shares Forsythe.

What inspired your decision to become a designer?

Both my parents are artists. My dad was constantly renovating and relocating the placement of walls, staircases and rooms within an old apple barn that was our first house. Since I was a child, I realised that the world around me could be transformed by my imagination.

What inspired your focus on designing flexible furniture?

I met Todd during architecture school while documenting coastal





This page: The Softwall acoustic partitions shrink to the thickness of a book when compressed, and can expand up to 4.5m long; Float teaware, pictured on paper furniture also designed by Molo

Opposite page: Todd MacAllen and Stephanie Forsythe of Molo; the Softwall acoustic partitions also feature magnetic end panels that can connect to additional units to create longer partitions and sculptural art installations

communities in Columbia. One neighbourhood that was particularly inspiring to us consisted of adaptable wooden houses built on stilts over the water. The flexible nature of these buildings provided the ability to adapt to changes in family size and to accommodate different types of work that served the community, such as fishing, sewing, welding, and baking; these flexible buildings facilitated a vibrant and sustainable way of living. So Todd and I started our own firm because we wanted to design a way of working and learning that is rooted in hands-on experience with materials and how things and places are made.

What's a favourite material that you love using and why?

Paper and wood. A blank piece of paper has endless creative possibilities. Paper is humble, easily accessible, recyclable and can be made from renewable and

responsible sources. [It's about] understanding sensory potential intimately, studying structural characteristics, and the ways in which a material can be shaped and joined to itself.

How do you make your work more eco-conscious?

Molo's award-winning Soft collection, consisting of flexible space partitions, lighting, table and seating elements, exemplifies our approach to sustainability. The collection was developed to provide an environmentally friendly alternative to traditional, rigid building materials. We take pleasure and pride in continually making iterative improvements to our products, processes and buildings. Currently, we are excited about our product development with sustainably sourced wood. And we are considering a plan to add solar panels to Molo's three buildings in Vancouver.





Crystal Clear

Danish brand Reflections Copenhagen upends Nordic design stereotypes with its playful and glamorous glass and crystal collections

Forget about all the clichés that you know about Northern European design—Danish brand Reflections Copenhagen goes above and beyond the understated neutral palette to create products that are both eclectic and decadent.

The brand was founded in 2015 by Andrea Larsson, with the desire to create a unique fusion of art and functionality, and to offer something distinctive and different to counteract the typical minimalist Nordic aesthetic. Its crystal collections feature vibrant hues and eye-catching forms that would fit perfectly within the ultimate

entertainment den or a handsome dining room. “I truly believe in the saying that ‘beauty changes how people act,’” declares Larsson.

The firm’s portfolio ranges from small decorative objects such as crystal candleholders, tableware and vessels to fabulous statement pieces that include crystal lamps, coffee tables and mirrors. Some of its statement pieces take a cue from the art deco movement, and feature faceted forms reminiscent of precious stones. Other designs meld simpler shapes with colourful details, resulting in fun accent pieces that can be easily incorporated into any design scheme. Here, Larsson tells us how these precious pieces can bring a good dose of glamour and fun to your abode.

What inspired your decision to start your own firm?
I come from a family of independent

and creative people; my family has given me both the opportunities and support to do my own designs and projects. I get inspiration from many things, like the art deco and bauhaus movements, as well as wallpaper patterns, fashion, and vintage furniture.

What keeps you inspired?
I’m always taking notes, pictures, and sketching; I think it’s a matter of keeping your eyes open [to ideas]. I always get fascinated by shadows; they are one of the most beautiful things that I know, and we have many [types of] shadows with the Scandinavian daylight. They are here for a short moment, so catch them and enjoy these moments.

What are the materials that interest you at this time?
I love crystal—the clearness of the material, and the way that colour has a direct impact on it. It’s an amazing material, and its hefty form is cool and distinctive. I work with light reflections and try to create them through the beautiful and strong colours of the crystal in any room.

I also like products like mirrors, as these are objects that will last but are also items that you have to take care of. Mirrors are delicate yet strong and sophisticated; a mirror can affect the shape of the light and the feeling of a room.

How do you make your work more eco-conscious?
I don’t overproduce, I don’t advertise too much and don’t waste anything: all my products coming from fairs and press events are sold, not trashed.

Could you tell us more about your upcoming projects?
We presented our novelties for Fall at M&O: a soft, clear-toned collection of glassware with a ‘70s vibe. I am also going into tableware, so I work with a wonderful Portuguese factory that specialises in this. As I used to do wallpaper design, I feel like I’m in wonderland doing these patterns for tableware and porcelain. I’m slowly learning about the techniques and the material; it’s a fun process and I’m very excited about this.



Clockwise from top left: The Chelsea short glass cups from Reflections Copenhagen; this mirror features diamond motifs and bronze-finished details; a table setting featuring the Shelby napkin ring, Chelsea short glass, dinner plates and a bowl from Reflections Copenhagen; the Danish brand's crystal vessels sport colourful forms and exquisite details

Opposite page: Andrea Larsson of Reflections Copenhagen





Draw the Line

Italian artist-designer Francesca Colombo makes her hand drawings the heart of her delicate and dreamy style that marries botanical motifs with soft tones and abstract details

While Francesca Colombo was born in Italy, her international perspective has helped her to work nearly anywhere in the world. After years spent plying her trade as both an art director and artist, Colombo returned to Milan and opened her own studio in 2019 and started designing porcelain plates, on top of her mainstay in designing patterns for upholstery collections.

Known for her delicate style, the designer is the creative mind behind an eclectic mix of patterned wallpapers and fabrics. While Colombo has since become an acclaimed designer, she prefers to work on small-batch, on-demand collections rather than to sell in large-scale, mass-distribution initiatives, backed by the conviction that it is worthwhile to produce quality pieces that also minimise wastage.

Each plate takes Colombo about a month to draw and design,

depending on the technique and colours selected, and another month for the artisans to produce the samples. Here, she reveals insights into her creative process, and tells us more about her new speciality of tableware design.

Why did you decide to focus on homeware design?

After working for years for several fashion and interior companies, I felt the need to fully express my artistic and aesthetic values without any intermediation and to show my creativity 100 per cent. So, I decided to focus on hand drawing, and mixing colours and botanical elements together. I am always excited to see how a specific [colour] “works” and relates to others.

How would you describe your style in a few adjectives?

Eclectic, colourful, chic,





Left to right: Plates from the Abstract series by Francesca Colombo; tableware from the Landscape No 1 collection, which features various botanical motifs; Colombo enjoys drawing by hand the illustrations that she creates for tableware, wallpaper and upholstery fabrics; Italian designer and artist Francesca Colombo

contemporary, and readable at a glance. My greatest passion is hand drawing; it is always interesting for me to create new designs. I really like how wallpaper is able to reproduce all the details of the original drawing, and with the highest colour fidelity.

Tell us more about your creative process.

It all starts with an idea; after this first intuitive and instinctive phase I start to think about the character of the design and the graphic elements that compose it according to the feeling I want to convey. [Then] the drawing phase begins: first with several sketches with various technical proofs, and then with the

final design. In addition to spending a lot of time on the drawing part, I spend just as much time on the research and study of the colour of the new design. For me, both the drawing and the colour [selection] have exactly the same importance and are definitely recognisable features of my work.

After these steps, I start thinking about how the design can work in harmony with the various shapes that are inside the dish service—I like that all the dishes in the set are always different from one another—and then I am ready to make the first samples in porcelain. The making of the samples is the last phase of the creative process. Thanks to the artisans' know-how

and artistic sensibility, they are able to understand the visual result that I want to achieve.

Could you tell us about the sustainable focus of your work?

My way of being sustainable is very simple: we only produce in Italy on demand, without [holding] any stock. I focus on high quality and durable collections. I hope my objects become the new [heirloom] accessories to be passed on from generation to generation.

What inspired your decision to focus on porcelain making?

Porcelain is a delicate and at the same time durable material. And I find this dual aspect of porcelain very fascinating: it is fragile and precious, but at the same time easy to use every day.

Lush Life

Addy Design Consultant takes us on a design tour through M Resort

Amid the hustle and bustle of Kuala Lumpur, M Resort is a luxurious oasis of calm. Only recently opened in Bukit Kiara, the hotel has become a benchmark for gracious tropical resort-style design in the city.

Designed by Addy Consultant Sdn Bhd (ADC), it may surprise that a relatively new design consultancy realised this project. However, its founder, Addy Wong, has over 15 years of experience in local and overseas projects. Indeed this exposure was instrumental in M Resort's polished design, whose effortlessness belies the amount of thought that went into every aspect.

SUM OF ITS PARTS

ADC is a full-service consultancy assisting clients from the design stage to operations. Wong believes communication is one of the cornerstones of creating effective design solutions for clients and was delighted that the brief was clear cut: "Our client wanted to achieve a resort in a city!"

To make an unforgettable first impression, the lobby is awash with natural light and lush greenery. A skylight was situated in its centre to create a welcoming warmth during the day while shining light dotting the feature ceiling gives the illusion of stars in a night sky after dark. Dark wood finishes and reception counters of intricately veined marble with green undertones add luxury and nature to the design. A pair of feature sculptures which look like dried leaves carry the story back in. M Resort's pool, located adjacent to

the lobby, is beautifully landscaped with local flora to soften the hard-edged buildings surrounding it.

The Hotel block contains the board room, the executive M Lounge executive lounge, and the All Day Dining outlet. "To underline the overarching design story, we included tree branches going up towards the ceiling here. This also functional as it covers the exposed M&E services above," explains Wong.

The rooms upstairs come in three categories, Superior, Deluxe and





This page, from top left: the impressive lobby, soft salmon headboards in the Deluxe rooms; subway tiles add a touch of flair in the bathrooms; Addy Wong, founder of Addy Design Consultant

Opposite page, from left: M Resort facade; organic sculptures in the lobby



Suite, each presenting different design challenges and opportunities. “The Superior rooms are the smallest category so we used various devices to enlarge the space visually. Decked out in Royal Blue, we added a full glass mirror in the bathroom and space-saving finishings,” states Wong. “To add more character, we went bold with black subway tiles for the wall finishes and dark wood for continuity.” The Deluxe room features a softer salmon colour to show the contrast of the rooms, its gentle colour tones a welcome respite for the weary traveler.

Onward to the Suite rooms, the designers carved out a family space with strategic furniture arrangements: “We thought about the subtle luxury of convenience here and we added details like including a pantry complete with wine bottle holder. The suite’s highlight is the bathroom, where the wardrobe has a two-way opening so you can access your items without having to go out of the bathroom. Twin wash basins are always welcome for couples traveling together, and the tub was positioned to have a fabulous view of the golf course. You have the option to have a complete view or privacy to yourself.”

The facilities block contains curated amenities like the gym, yoga room, kids club and changing rooms. Eight function rooms can also be found here, named after famous local districts and towns starting with Bukit. A grey tone continues the design story while

maintaining a certain formality to the space. The grand ballroom had to be designed to be multi-functional and accommodate up to 1000 guests. “We installed an operable wall so the space can be divided up and various lighting settings to create different moods,” enthuses Wong. “Aesthetics-wise, we added a majestic pendant lamp against a reflective stainless steel ceiling to multiply its impact. Grey, toned fabrics and dark walnut finishing continue the sophisticated colour story and catch the pretty lights.”

The finished results speak for themselves, and ADC seems poised to add its distinctive touch to more projects in the city and beyond. While resorts are their speciality, ADC is also adept at imbuing cultural design in local business projects, ample proof of the design team’s versatility.

For more information about ADC, go <https://instagram.com/designadc>

STUDIO VISIT

House and Garden

Essential Design Intergated's award-winning office is a home office in every sense of the word *By Jennifer Choo. Photography by David Yeow*



From left: Large openings fill the spaces with natural light; directors of EDI from (left to right) IDr Wong Pei San, Ar. David Chan, Ar. Chan Mun Inn



These days when the idea of home and work spaces are blurred, the wonderfully homey studios of Essential Design Integrated (EDI Architects) seem ahead of the curve. Located in a typical three-storey shophouse in Damansara Jaya, the idea was to create a 'home office' complete with living and dining rooms, a kitchen, pocket gardens, and balconies.

"This decision was made before anyone knew what a pandemic was and before we were forced to work from home. So to design the office 'like home' makes a lot of sense for many of us now when we are allowed to come back to the office," muses MunInn Chan, one of the three directors of EDI.

LIGHTEN UP

The first and most important order of business was making the office

as bright as possible, as the 21m deep intermediate unit originally had small windows towards the front and even tinier windows at the back. All façade windows were replaced, and the internal layout and planning were designed to avoid partitioning that would block visibility. This decision was also essential to ensure good cross-ventilation.

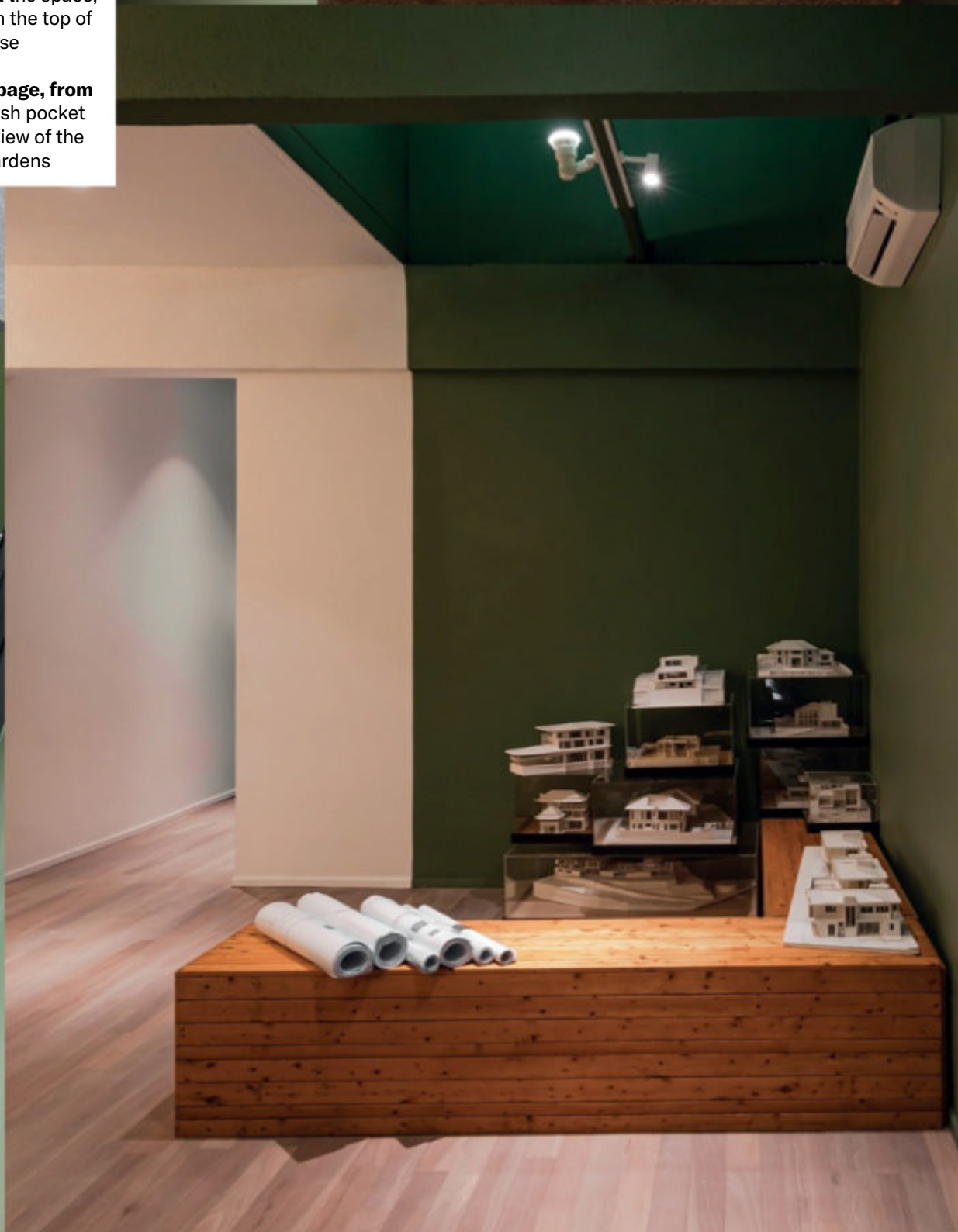
While opening up the façade and having bigger glass panels were good for daylighting, this wasn't visually enticing for the internal working environment. "Our goal was creating a workspace providing the comfort of home. So all the openings towards the exterior were paired with a planter or a balcony that would allow for planting trees and vegetation," states Chan. "We also have plants growing on the front façade providing shade and reducing glare to the working space and lounge area."



This page, clockwise from top left: The Theatre; the internal staircase feels light and airy; a deep green colour was carried throughout the space; a view from the top of the staircase



Opposite page, from top: The lush pocket garden; a view of the hanging gardens





LIVING LARGE

A variety of areas are dotted throughout the three levels with myriad functions. The living room is flexible and multi-purpose. Here, studio members can use the space as a relaxed sitting room or switch on the Smart TV for a meeting, presentation area, or even Zooms. Another main gathering space is the theatre and dining room, where a convertible split space allows for a boardroom-type meeting with doors closed and an open theatre presentation format.

The kitchen is fully functional complete with a built-in fridge and oven. “The centre island is a common space used for group discussions, meetings and presentations, and office lunches amongst the staff. This was a well-used area, especially during the conditional lockdown,” recalls Chan. Next to the kitchen is a small balcony that houses the edible garden. “We have basil, mint and even a pomelo tree growing there,” says Chan. “The balcony also serves as an outdoor breather and break out space for the office when one needs to just step out for a short while.”

SHOOTING FOR THE MOON

The upper stairs were designed to be open, allowing the facade to extend deep into the floor plan. “When you live in a tropical climate where rain sometimes falls not vertically down but sideways, we made this decision very carefully,” recalls Chan. “By opening up the stairs, we could create a pocket garden next to the living room and simultaneously create garden steps that lead up to the architectural studios.” Adding a touch of whimsy is the sizeable spherical light fixture that hangs over the garden giving the space a soft ‘moon-light’ glow.

When designing this office, the designers extended the idea of sustainability both to the built environment and office philosophy. To this end, existing materials were upcycled from the previous office and reused as furniture, wall panelling and built-ins as much as possible. Sums up Chan: “The approach for a calmer and more casual lifestyle at the office encourages creativity and productivity whilst ensuring the health and well-being of the people using the workplace.”





Green Dream

Sustainable manufacturing is at the heart of all SKS Worldwide Group's products

Sustainable manufacturing has become a critical issue in today's world, where climate change, pollution, and resource depletion are significant concerns. Manufacturers are recognising this and are working towards incorporating sustainable practices in their operations. Not to mention how consumers increasingly demand environmentally conscious products, sustainable manufacturing has become a crucial aspect of modern business practices.

A renowned global furniture and equipment industry leader, the SKS Worldwide Group has a rich history dating back to 1974. With over 1 million square feet of operational

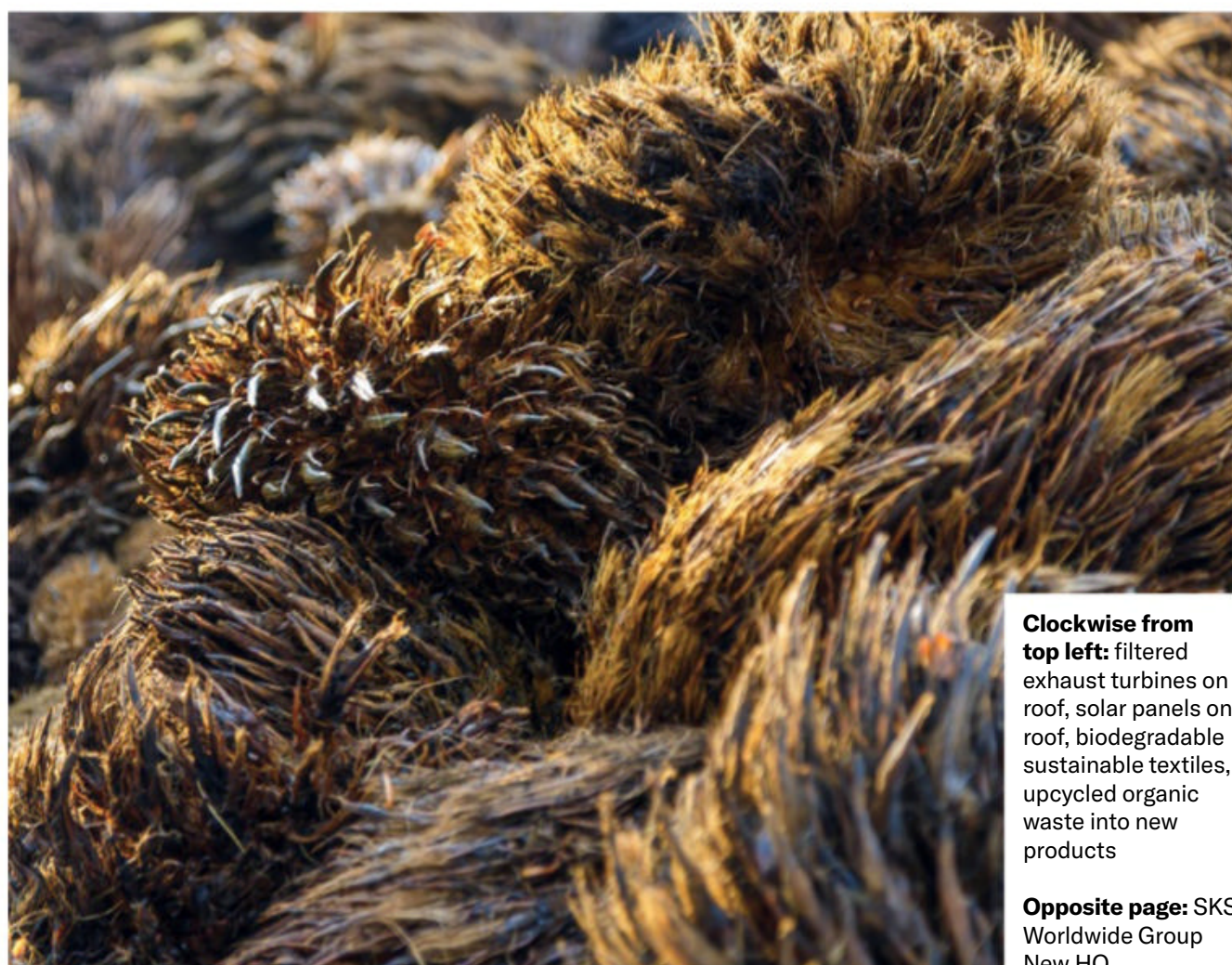
space, the company has established itself as a specialist in designing and engineering high-quality furniture and equipment that are both functional and aesthetically pleasing.

The company's expertise and state-of-the-art machinery enable it to deliver world-class products to various sectors, including hotels and conventions, hospitals, corporate office towers, retail brand outlets, casinos, universities, and laboratories.

Throughout its history, SKS Worldwide Group has completed over 20,000 projects in more than 60 countries. This global presence is a testament to the company's dedication to quality and service and

its ability to deliver complex projects across diverse regions.

As a forerunner in the manufacturing industry, SKS Worldwide Group is committed to sustainable manufacturing. Recognised as Asia's greenest multi-sector furniture, fixtures, and equipment manufacturer, the company has implemented various environmentally friendly practices, such as using renewable energy sources, reducing waste, and recycling materials. The company's manufacturing processes are designed to minimise energy consumption combined with a slew of targeted initiatives to reduce its carbon footprint.



Clockwise from top left: filtered exhaust turbines on roof, solar panels on roof, biodegradable sustainable textiles, upcycled organic waste into new products

Opposite page: SKS Worldwide Group New HQ

Today, SKS Worldwide Group is a name synonymous with excellence and sustainability. Fully committed to reaching carbon targets for a better and greener world tomorrow, sustainable manufacturing is not just a buzzword or a passing trend to the group but a crucial aspect of our future.

It involves finding ways to reduce and upcycle its waste, conserve energy and minimise negative impact of manufacturing processes on the environment. By adopting sustainable manufacturing practices since 2021, SKS Worldwide Group is now the greenest multi-sector furniture, fixture and equipment manufacturer in Asia.

For more information, look up www.sksworldwide.com

INSPIRATION

LIGHT WORK

What happens when a biochemist and an event planner have a meeting of minds? In the case of Okra Candle's Michelle and Erik Rust, the result offers fresh takes on one of the oldest forms of craft on the planet: candle making

By Robyn Alexander.

Photography by Warren Heath / Bureaux

LIGHT



Previous spread: Okra Candle founders Michelle and Erik Rust

This spread: Whether she's dreaming up the perfect dipped candle to suit a vintage candle holder, or conceptualising a cool new colourway, Michelle brings a fresh eye to everything Okra Candle produces

In 2019, Okra Candle's Michelle Rust was on the lookout for a particular style of candle for an event she was curating—but could not find what she wanted anywhere. “I went to a candle maker and what they came up with was not a success,” she says.

When she talked it over with her partner Erik Rust, they decided to try making their own candle prototypes. Armed with a reasonably priced 3D printer and plenty of enthusiasm, the couple embarked on the project that has, in just three years, become their burgeoning business, Okra Candle.

The couple complement each other perfectly: she has a creative eye and loves nothing more than to style beautiful tablescapes, events and spaces; he is a biochemist by training who also happens to be an instinctive teacher and gardener, as well as a musician.

“Before I knew Erik was a biochemist, I actually thought he was just a musician,” says Michelle. But most of all, she adds: “Erik is a tinkerer. If something is not working, he will tinker with it until he has mastered the skill of creating it himself, or getting it to work again.” Unsurprisingly, this blend of practical and conceptual abilities has served Okra Candle very well.

The brand's name came to the duo during a road trip at the very end of 2019. They had created their first successful candle designs, and were ready to go beyond using the results in Michelle's work to roll out a range for sale to the general public. “We were playing with names and we knew we wanted something short and powerful that would be remembered quite easily, and ‘Okra’ just stuck. And then we added the ‘Candle’ to tie in clearly with the nature of our business,” Michelle explains.

Coincidentally, one of Okra Candle's early designs was the Gear candle: a concept that visually references both gear cogs and the ridged shape of the okra fruit.

Since the creation of the Gear—a strikingly bold, cone-shaped design that immediately catches the eye—there's been a veritable outpouring of fresh takes on chandling from Okra Candle. From the most elegant of hand-dipped dinner tapers to the bold beauty of sculpted and moulded forms, it seems the sky's the limit when it comes to the couple's ability to reconceptualise their product.

The enterprising couple's innovative designs are rather remarkable, especially when you consider that candle making is one of the oldest forms of craft on the planet—its basic technology is at least 5,000 years old, dating back to the simple rushlights used by the ancient Egyptians. Counterintuitively, perhaps it was precisely the fact that neither Erik nor Michelle had any formal training in candle making that has enabled them to work so freely with the possibilities of their chosen medium. They learnt on the job, by way of trial, error and experimentation.





“Wax is a very forgiving medium... You can re-melt it if something goes wrong, and then you can create something new”

— MICHELLE RUST



Clockwise from top left: Erik demonstrates the refined craft of chandling, which encompasses heating the wax to just the right temperature, carefully securing the wick in the chosen mould, and pouring the molten wax in a steady stream; handmade dipped candles boast a luxurious sheen that is built up via the many layers of wax; the Serpent candle stands on its own coiled base; a classic dipped candle in ebony is complemented by the sensuous curves of the Forest candle holder by Jan Ernst and a framed photo shot by Jacobus Snyman; the Lemon candle in teal is a sculptural conversation piece





“It took us a while to get to know our medium,” says Michelle. She explains that it’s taken time to understand precisely how wick sizing works best, for example, and to develop just the right blends of waxes to use when moulding or dipping candles. “This year we’ve been able to push on a lot further, because we really understand it now. Wax is a wonderful medium to work with,” she says. “And when you understand it, you can push its boundaries quite a lot.”

Many of Okra Candle’s designs are made in 3D-printed moulds that enable the creation of candles with a playful variety of twists, turns and unexpected details. And then there’s the brand’s wide-ranging colour palette, which is vibrant and innovative by turns, ranging from lilac and topaz to a spectrum of cool, contemporary greens. Experimentation has been at the heart of Michelle and Erik’s work to date, and this shows in everything they create.

“When we train new people, we explain that wax is a very forgiving medium,” says Michelle. “Obviously, if you have to re-melt a candle you lose some of the mass of the wax, but at least you can re-melt it if something goes wrong, and then you can create something new.”

The public’s response to the duo’s work has been hugely enthusiastic; not entirely a surprise to Michelle and Erik, who had seen the gap in the market that their designs were made to fill. But as Michelle says, “As a business owner, you will always be uncertain about its future success, and we put ourselves completely into the product and into our brand.”

The overwhelmingly positive feedback, and the achievement of rapidly racking up a range of collaborations with fellow South African creatives, have thus been very gratifying. Ideas for new candle designs “come from everywhere,” says Michelle. “I think anything can inspire, from the movement of sand on a dune, to the way someone walks down the street, or an earring that someone is wearing.”

The Okra Candle aesthetic is sophisticated, yet sports an irreverent, tongue-in-cheek quality that both charms and beguiles. “We do enjoy expressing ourselves,” Michelle says. “Like the Screwed candle, for example. We designed it on a Sunday evening after working all weekend, so we felt absolutely freakin’ screwed. And that’s it, it looks like a screw and we felt screwed. So it was just very fitting.”

From the delightfully witty to the everyday essential—Okra Candle has just expanded into making a range of classic boxed dinner candles—Michelle and Erik seem capable of bringing an almost limitless range of desirable designs into candle form. Combining functionality with charm, their creations are affordable luxuries that add a unique touch to a table or display, and Okra Candle looks set to garner many more admirers in the years to come.

On the Horizon

Revel in the best of luxury resort living in Horizon Hills

The freehold township of Horizon Hills in Iskandar Puteri, Johor, has become an enclave that's synonymous with luxury resort living in Malaysia's southern region. This ambitious project is a joint venture between Gamuda Land and UEM Sunrise, both bursa-listed companies and well reputed local and global property developers with projects in Singapore, Australia, United Kingdom and Vietnam.

A premium neighbourhood township with distinguished homes, the development comprises of a mix of residential and commercial

buildings in a low-density spread and amongst lush greenery and nature.

The proximity of Horizon Hills to Singapore is a key feature, with easy access to the Malaysia- Singapore Second Link.

Indeed the Horizon Hills township offers an enviable quality of life and has created a sense of community in one of the largest and most impressive integrated townships in Johor, against the backdrop of the championship-quality Horizon Hills golf course. Unsurprisingly the development





Clockwise from bottom left: The double height living room in Mansion 18; amazing views; the master bedroom overlooks the award-winning Horizon Hills golf course; Mansion 18 is nestled amongst nature and greenery; the walk-in wardrobe afford the luxury of space

has garnered a slew of awards and accolades, most recently Best Luxury Landed Development by PropertyGuru Asia Property Awards 2022 and Best Low-Density Development by Starproperty Awards 2022 for The Mansion18.

LIVING IN LUXURY

Bungalow homes are a particular favourite amongst homeowners and the response has been overwhelmingly positive. To date, Horizon Hills has completed more than 200 units of bungalow homes 100% being fully sold.

The most recent launch in this category is Mansion18. An exclusive enclave of only 24 units, these 3-storey bungalow homes boast a minimum land area of 5,800 sq ft up to 10,000 sq ft. Prices range from RM4.5 to 7 million, a small price to pay for these highly desirable homes with spectacular views and in the city's most coveted address.

Mansion 18 homes reflect the luxurious lifestyle home buyers have come to expect from this category with double height living rooms, a lift and superlative view, Well designed to accommodate

the requirements of the well-heeled, units are elegantly finessed with high-quality finishings and materials.

Sustainable features have been incorporated in the units which include full height and large glass window openings inviting natural light and better ventilation, solar heater panels and rainwater harvesting systems. For added peace of mind, units are also fitted with video intercom and panic button systems.

For more information, head on over to www.horizonhills.com.my



DESIGN

Just Press Paws

Furry friends are part of our family, especially in these spaces designed to be specifically pet-friendly *By Jennifer Choo*

As pet ownership booms, it's only logical that "barkitecture" and pet-friendly design are rapidly gaining popularity. Gone are the days when pets were assigned a random corner of the house; these days, their owners are creating dedicated spaces for their furry friends. Here are three inspiring spaces.



Clockwise from left: Jasper has little cubby holes in the cabinets; Ong designed the built-ins for maximum cat fun; Jasper enjoys watching birds from his perch; Jasper running up and down the ramps; Jun Ong, co-founder of POW Ideas and Jasper, tuxedo cat



PHOTOGRAPHY DAVID YEOW



KUALA LUMPUR

JUN ONG'S HOME

Co-founder of POW Ideas, light artist and cat-dad Jun Ong lives with Jasper, his tuxedo breed rescue cat. Ong, who describes Jasper as territorial, dominant, curious, playful, affectionate and loves art, tells us more about the home they share.

What's your home like and how did you design your home to accommodate your pet's needs?

We live in an old low-rise walk-up flat from the 1980s in Taman Desa. It's a split-level unit with lots of sunlight and windows around a courtyard. I kept the design minimal yet raw with accents of colours and textures through quirks, vintage furniture and custom pieces. I love collecting art too. It's a small flat but I wanted more spaces for Jasper to climb so I designed vertical ramps, nooks for him to explore and also have vantage points of the street below.

Does your pet enjoy the space?

Yes, but he enjoys my bed the most.

What's your favourite part of the space?

The kitchen, I love cooking and hosting.

What's your pet's favourite part of the space?

The staircase that links the living area and rooms as it overlooks a courtyard and his favourite beings to look at, pigeons.

**Tatler
Homes**

Style

77



Clockwise from left:
The cat playroom;
the open plan office;
Chong with Elijah;
the cats watch the world
go by from the large
windows

PENANG

NEVERMORE GROUP OFFICE

Partners in life and work, Chuah Say Yang and Chong Su Min are the founders of design firm Nevermore and Xcent Design Consultancy, respectively. They have three cats, two British shorthairs, playful Jose and shy Ramen and one affectionate ragdoll, Elijah. Chuah gives us a tour of their chic cat-friendly new office in Penang.

Tell us about your new office.

When designing the new office, we allocated a room for our cats' food, water and litter box. We also included elements like the holes in the sliding door to the pantry to satisfy their peeping habits.

Do your pets enjoy the space?

As much as they enjoy the company of our co-workers, they also enjoy checking out our new clients and meeting new people.

What's your favourite part of the space?

We love the tiny door we designed for the cat room and the wall panel filled with mounting holes that allow

us to switch the configuration of the climbing shelves and sleeping pods. From time to time, our cats get to experience new adventures.

What's their favourite part of the space?

Most of the time, you'll find our cats napping in the compartment underneath the workstation that was purposely designed for our cats. They like to hide themselves under the table because they feel more secure. Jose loves to roam around in the office and the open space workstation is his runway. Ramen, being the bossiest cat, loves sitting on the director's chair.

Would you have done anything differently?

If we had a bigger studio, we could build more climbing shelves along the wall for our cats to explore and be able to perch at a higher level but overall, we are happy with the results as we believe they enjoy the space very much.

PENANG

NOORDIN MEWS

Located in the heart of Penang's Unesco heritage zone, Noordin Mews is a 1920s Peranakan shophouse turned hotel. The charmingly restored hotel is also proudly pet-friendly. Belinda Boey, general manager of Noordin Mews, explains how.

What are the pet-skewed facilities available?

We've been a pet-friendly hotel ever since we opened our doors. Although fur kids will not be able to enjoy a dip in the pool, we welcome them to enjoy lounging and dining with family in the living area or at the poolside. We provide various pet amenities—be it a pet welcome pack, pet sitter, the loan of pet wellness items but most importantly, the hotel and team genuinely welcome fur kids with open arms.

What design features were included in the hotel for pets?

The interiors of the room is mostly hard furniture and furnishing, which accommodates the pet's presence and comfort.

How about food, is breakfast included for pets?

We are partnering with Dogfood.com.my that specialise in healthy and balanced meals for dogs at a small charge. We also provide a range of fresh, balanced nutrition and quality dog food packs for the convenience of our guests.



Clockwise from top right: The pool is a favourite spot of humans and pets; lounging by the pool; the hotel's hardwood furniture is pet-proof; plenty of open air spaces in Noordin Mews



What kind of pets are allowed at Noordin Mews?

As long as they fit through the door, we will welcome them in! We've had dogs, cats, birds, chameleons, rabbits, monkeys, guinea pigs, sugar gliders and much more.

Does Noordin Mews have regular pet guests?

We've had many returnees with some coming twice a year for a staycation with their pets. Their pets have already made us their home in Penang!

Is there a favourite spot in the hotel that the pets love?

Our landscaped garden area is very popular with the pets. As animals generally love being outdoor, our airy garden is the favourite hangout spot. Also, it's one of the perfect places for some Instagram-worthy pictures!



TRAVEL

TIME AND SPACE

Craft a unique Kyoto experience tailored to your own travelling style and interests—we highlight properties with beautiful interiors and memorable stories to tell

By Hong Xinying

IMAGES COURTESY OF GARRYA NIJO CASTLE KYOTO, MAANA KIYOMIZU, MARUFUKURO



This page: The discreet entrance of Garrya Nijo Castle, a hotel located amidst traditional shops and teahouses in Kyoto

Opposite page, clockwise from top left: The elegant lobby of Garrya Nijo Castle; breakfast dishes from Singular; the Garrya Rikyu Suite features a spacious terrace that spans the length of the room; the restaurant's flooring comprises a checkerboard mix of granite and natural stone

Previous spread: A view of Nijo Castle, the namesake landmark from which Garrya Nijo Castle derived its name



Change is inherent in cities; these urban centres are designed to evolve with the passage of time, adapting to the new needs of its inhabitants and travellers. And in Kyoto, Japan's much-visited ancient capital, that sense of transmutation is steadily speeding up.

A stream of new and upcoming hotel openings is making this perennial destination even more appealing to local and international visitors, while catering to various travelling styles, interests and design tastes. From an unexpected find located amid modern houses and *machiyas* (traditional wooden townhouses) in the suburbs and a pilgrimage venue for video-game enthusiasts to a luxury property located enviably close to a Unesco world heritage site, we pick out some unforgettable venues to shortlist for your next sojourn to Kyoto.



Creative Stronghold

Garrya Nijo Castle

The concept of holistic living guides the design of this wellness themed property by Banyan Tree, while integrating subtle allusions to the landmark castle

A quiet bamboo-lined side entrance leads to the foyer of Garrya Nijo Castle in Kyoto, where a spectacular view awaits. When I visited the hotel in November, I was mesmerised by the sight of splendourous autumn foliage, beautifully reflected onto the glossy tops of the lacquered tables in the lobby. It is a scene that invites you to enjoy a moment of repose in a space made for mindfulness; quite aptly, the hotel will roll out meditation sessions in the garden after springtime arrives.

Located near the namesake Nijo Castle, this 25-room property

is one of two hotels in the city by Singapore-based hospitality firm Banyan Tree, and is part of its expansion plans in Japan. The Garrya brand concept is focused on wellness, and this is conveyed visually through its modern minimalist design. These elements are also brought out in the multi-course menu of its signature restaurant, Singular, which serves elegantly plated dishes prepared with fresh produce that aim to make you feel healthy and well.

The unified look of Garrya Nijo Castle is the result of a tripartite collaboration between

Jun Mitsui & Associates Architects, Hashimoto Yukio Design Studio and landscape design firm Sola Associates. A spacious landscaped courtyard was specially created on the site, with all the rooms angled to optimise views of the garden and Nijo Castle.

The property's rugged stone facade offers a nod to the design of the historical castle complex. Constructed in 1603, the Unesco-recognised landmark was built as an impressive abode for Tokugawa Ieyasu, Japan's first shogun of the Edo period; its hefty outer walls recall the appearance of a fortress to signify the political and military might of the family in residence. "We sought to incorporate the composition of Nijo Castle, and gave a modern interpretation of the ancient use of shingled roofs, with the use of mottled tiles [in this hotel]," says Shigeki Irie, project director at Jun Mitsui & Associates Architects.

The Japanese concept of *shakkei*, which loosely translates into "borrowed scenery", guides the interior design by Hashimoto Yukio Design Studio, which aims to mirror and enhance the seasonal beauty of the landscaped garden and the vicinity. Echoing the reflective nature of the pond, the interior was designed to highlight the natural allure of the outdoor scenery. These are complemented with local elements such as the use of Japanese paper panels in the elevator, as well as red lacquered finishes that are a nod to craft traditions.

All together, the peaceful tableau presented is an ode to the contrasting elements that make Kyoto so memorable, in an ancient city where modern life and Japanese tradition are so closely entwined.

Play On

Marufukuro

Get a peek into the past in the nostalgic atmosphere of this unique property—the former Nintendo headquarters is now a boutique hotel that combines its art deco roots with modern minimalist additions by Tadao Ando Architects

Long before its popular video game franchises such as *Pokémon*, *Super Mario*, and *Donkey Kong* won the hearts of fans worldwide, Japanese gaming giant Nintendo first started as a traditional playing cards manufacturer in Kyoto. For over two decades from 1933, an art deco-influenced compound in the city acted as its headquarters, until the company vacated the premises and left the site unoccupied for decades.

Today, the site has received a new lease of life as boutique hotel

Marufukuro; its current iteration and name recall the building's original *fuku* (which means luck in Japanese) emblem, a recurring circular motif seen on its facade and interior. Its remarkable transformation is led by Plan Do See, a Tokyo-based lifestyle company with over 30 years of history, which currently runs three hotels and resorts in Japan, as well as over a dozen restaurants in Asia and around the world. As part of the refurbishment, the company restored the historical elements



This page: Marufukuro is a boutique property that was once the headquarters of gaming giant Nintendo

Opposite page: Some of the rooms feature original art deco elements that are paired with mid-century style furnishings; the understated Junior Suite is among the rooms done in a modern minimalist style; the Japanese Suite embraces a distinctly local air with its tatami-floored room and an outdoor bath; dishes at Carta carry Western influences while featuring local produce





while adding modern amenities to the site. It brought in Tadao Ando Architects to design an annex building, so that the property now houses a total of 18 rooms.

The team takes pride in revitalising heritage venues, as Reina Matsuo, marketing director of Plan Do See, explains to me. She adds that decorative details referencing the building’s history abound: framed displays of playing cards are hung on the walls, and old wallcoverings have been upcycled to create paper mache animals that add a fun touch to the lobby.

Every inch of the property has been thoughtfully decorated, such that each nook contains a pleasant surprise for visitors. From stained-glass windows to a library furnished with design books and Nintendo paraphernalia, there is so much to catch the eye; the Yamauchi family office was consulted on the design, and was particularly involved in the curation of the library in the Marufukuro hotel. The cosy space features various game consoles and artefacts displayed on the shelves in an inviting space where visitors can read up about the firm’s history.

The rooms themselves feature retro decorative elements that speak of their mid-century design influences: the soft furnishings and accessories feature jewel-toned hues and plush fabrics like velvet and corduroy. Some of the rooms come with their own balcony, which look out to quiet views of the riverside neighbourhood. Among the notable options is the Residential Suite in the annex building, which has a modern design attuned to the pared-back aesthetic that Tadao Ando Architects is known for; it even bears a signature by Ando himself, scrawled onto a concrete structural wall in the suite.

Backed by Plan Do See’s concept of *omotenashi*—a Japanese term that represents a heartfelt and hospitable approach towards receiving guests—the hotel features a full-board room fee that includes light bites and lunch in the lounge area, as well as a multi-course breakfast and dinner at its signature restaurant, Carta. Helmed by chef Ai Hosokawa, Carta is a charming 23-seat venue that offers Western-inspired dishes that thoughtfully



incorporate Japanese ingredients, served on tableware from local studios. Its interior similarly features handmade tiles, along with Taizan ceramics and lighting pieces crafted by Japanese talents.

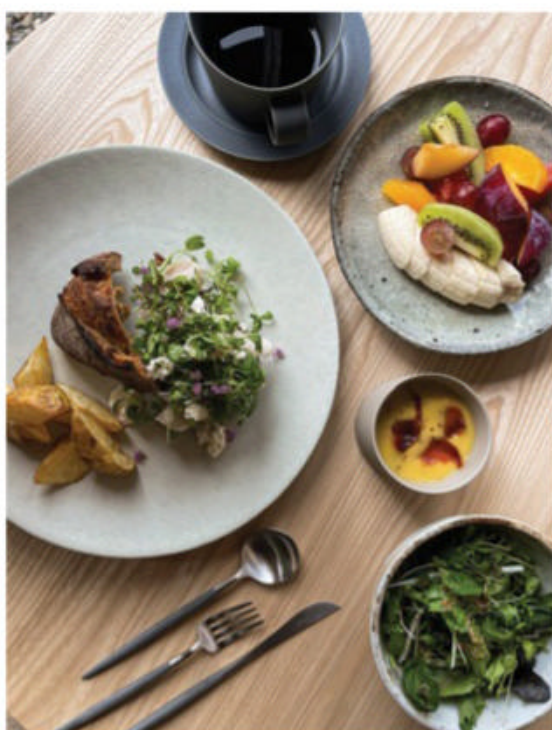
A stay at this unique property certainly feels like you’ve been transported back in time; nothing too kitschy, and all accomplished in a tasteful manner that will thrill die-hard Nintendo fans and design lovers alike.



Take it Slow

Maana Kiyomizu

The third and latest venture by Maana Homes offers an ode to mindful living with modern minimalist rooms, a modern coffeehouse, as well as a store and studio that celebrate local craft traditions



The impetus for Maana Homes sprang up from a cosy dinner between two friends in Spain. During this trip together, co-founders Irene Chang and Hana Tsukamoto had visited several Airbnb rental properties, but felt there was a gap between unique accommodation options and high hospitality standards. “Many of the homes we stayed in were beautiful, but lacked the modern luxuries one would expect from a hotel,” recalls Chang. At that time, the two friends were planning a mid-career change; Tsukamoto, who was a creative director in advertising, was planning to move back to Japan from New York, while Chang was contemplating her next step after years of working in the hospitality industry.

Upon Tsukamoto’s return, she came across choice sites in Kyoto

that she felt had immense potential. Formerly used as teahouses, these properties measured just under 1,000 sq ft and are located separately within 3km of one another. These structures were redone as a pair of two-bedroom townhouses by Shigenori Uoya Architects and Associates, a Kyoto-based firm with expertise in restoring such historical properties; they were opened in 2018 as Maana Kyoto and Maana Kamo to provide a home away from home for local and international travellers. Each property features its own design that incorporates tatami-floored rooms with futon mattresses as well as Western-style bedrooms.

When it came to their third venture, Maana Kiyomizu, the two friends wanted to go beyond providing a beautiful place to stay for their guests. They chose a quiet





Clockwise from top left: Kissa Kishin is a modern coffeehouse within Maana Kiyomizu; menu options include brunch staples and Westernised lunch offerings; POJ Studio combines a retail space on the ground floor with a second storey that hosts craft workshops and exhibitions; the living area of a suite in Maana Kiyomizu



lot in the suburbs of Kyoto as the site of a new space that would also foster a sense of community.

The team had to start with a blank slate for Maana Kiyomizu, as the original structures—a set of four former teahouse buildings—were in a state of disrepair. Shigenori Uoya Architects and Associates retained the interior roofs, structural beams, and columns, and redid the rest, working in collaboration with Ikei Takahashi Architects to design a compound that would house three suites, a cafe, a homeware shop, and a venue for exhibitions and craft-making workshops. The result is a captivating blend of airy spaces done up in a modern minimalist style, looking out to views of an open field and a nearby temple.

The Kyoto-based Tsukamoto also enlisted new collaborators for the shared spaces within Maana Kiyomizu. She had already teamed up with Swiss-Japanese entrepreneur Tina Koyama to found POJ Studio (Pieces of Japan), and posited the idea to run its first

brick-and-mortar store within the Maana Kiyomizu compound. She also reached out to local breakfast stalwart Kishin to open Kissa Kishin, a modern *kissaten* (Japanese-style coffeehouse) borne from the desire to provide a cosy and casual brunch spot for their guests and intrepid travellers.

“Having more public spaces such as a cafe and store would allow us to cultivate a creative community and offer guests a complete lifestyle experience. Our vision for this space was clear from the beginning; an intimate project where guests can stay, dine and shop,” adds Chang.

This all-in-one venue represents a significant step forward for the independent brand, which seeks to celebrate mindful living and honour local craft traditions. “It is Kyoto’s humble way of life that is most intriguing to us,” declares Chang. “We wanted to create a space that showcases how Kyoto’s traditions can beautifully fit into our modern lives, with the intention to inspire a more mindful way of living.”



Be transported by
a mix of captivating
havens from
around the world

Tatler SANT



A3 Projects Ipoh house with its stunning three-storey high spiralling helix staircase. **Opposite page:** Architect Anthony Orelowitz's family home in Johannesburg has a master bedroom with an internal courtyard

PHOTOGRAPHY ELSA YOUNG / BUREAUX; DAVID YEOW

UABLES





WHERE THE HEART IS

Architect Anthony Orelowitz has designed a home for his family that reinvents what it means to make a haven in Johannesburg

By Graham Wood. Photography by Elsa Young/Bureaux

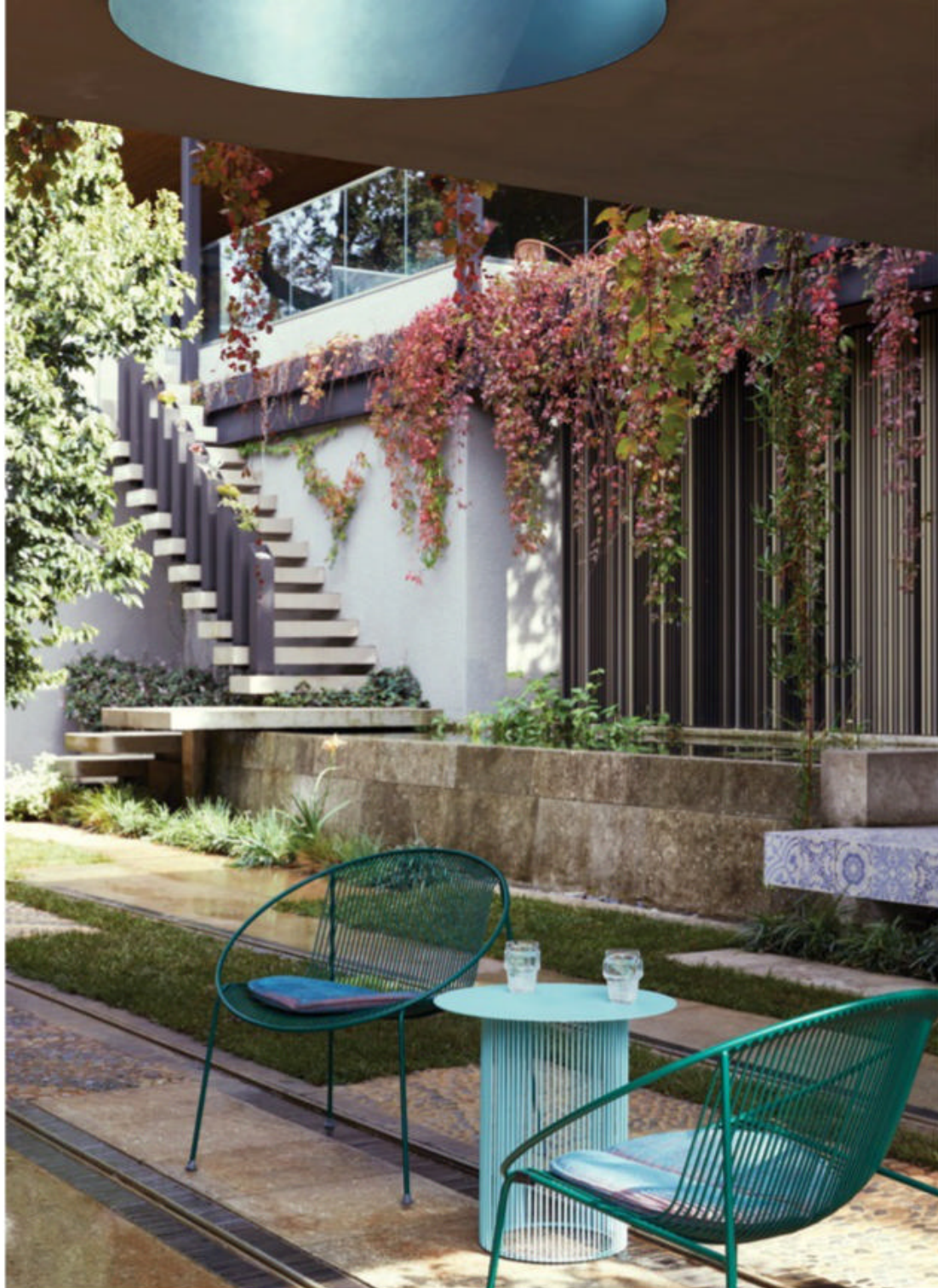


This page: Seen from the upper-floor areas, the permeability of the home's pavilion-like design reveals itself; the curves of the Papa Sun sofa and chair are a counterpoint to the straight-lined architecture

Opposite page: The Hula chairs and Cha Cha tables by Haldane Martin are a playful update on John Salterini's mid-century Hoop chairs, which were once ubiquitous in South African gardens; these windows on the underside of the pool cast a liquid light over the courtyard; the wood finish on the kitchen island mirrors the aluminium element on the facade

Previous spread: A pond at the entrance provides a welcoming coolness while a variation in colour on the aluminium cladding softens the look of the facade; architect Anthony Orelowitz and interior designer Julia Day





“In Johannesburg, there is no mountain [and] there’s no sea. Here, you have to create your own habitat,” says architect Anthony Orelowitz, commenting on the geography of South Africa’s largest city. Houses here tend to look outwards, seeking to catch a distant glimpse of the ocean. That, at heart, was the basis of his response to Johannesburg’s urban character when he designed his family home in the city’s famously forested suburbs.

Orelowitz’s firm, Paragon, is responsible for some of the city’s most significant architectural landmarks; yet the architect confesses that he “[has] not done a house in nearly 15 years”. Nevertheless, by working closely with architect Elliot Marsden and interior designer Julia Day, Orelowitz conjured a vision of what it means to make a Johannesburg home perfectly suited to the city and utterly unlike its neighbours.

The plot of land Orelowitz was to build his home on had previously been a tennis court that was accessed via a long driveway, far from the main street; it felt like a self-contained island with huge jungle-like trees in a sea of suburbia. Day was involved from the very earliest stages of this project, so the ideas that drove the design have been sustained right down to the tiniest details. The interior



designer says that working on this house was unlike any other she had ever worked on.

“Details everywhere were customised as we went along,” she says. Day recalls redesigning entire bathrooms so that the layout of the tiles would be perfectly even, lining up exactly with the doors so that no uneven size tiles were necessary. Designing, engineering, building and decorating were thus one endlessly changing experiment, evolving even as the renovation took shape.

To create his habitat, Orelowitz turned to the archetype of the atrium house: an internal courtyard wrapped around on all sides by the house, creating a peaceful sanctuary open to the sky. He calls it a “self-contained oasis in the city”. The house itself is a series of pavilions, with vast sliding doors and screens that can be opened and closed to reconfigure the spaces in countless ways.

Rather than simply surround the central courtyard, however, Orelowitz describes the way in which he “pushed” the landscape through the pavilions and out to the very edges of the site. “The ground plane washes through the house completely from one end

to the other,” he says. This, he explains, creates “secondary courtyards” all around the house, where the pavilions open onto peaceful nooks under the trees, and the boundary walls in effect become the walls of the house.

Despite its elongated, low-slung appearance, the house also rises to create an upper level in the treetops, carefully designed around branches that lean into and over the structure. It’s like a “big, adult treehouse”, says the homeowner. The effect is a sense of space knitted together vertically as it is horizontally.

Orelowitz designed the house “upside down”, with the bedrooms at ground level, nestled under the trees. The living area and outdoor entertainment areas—the pool

This page, left to right: Orelowitz’s psychologist wife Zahava has a study that subtly reflects her love of Eastern philosophies with the use of wicker and a lacquered finish on the Gebrüder Thonet Vienna Targa sofa by GamFratesi; the workspace also features the De Padova Tondo armchair by Vico Magistretti and the Ligne Roset Clyde desk by Numéro 111, with brass-tipped legs that pick up the wallpaper’s gold details

Opposite page: The Gebrüder Thonet Vienna Targa collection reappears in the form of houndstooth-patterned chairs in the lounge, which also features De Padova furnishings such as the Mosaique sofa by Piero Lissoni, LC03 chairs by Fabian Schwaerzler and Maarten Van Severen, and Ishi low table by Nendo; in a smaller lounge are the Cassina P22 Wingback chair by Patrick Norguet and Vitra Butterfly stool by Sori Yanagi, along with a tall sculpture on the table by Edoardo Villa and a painting by Fred Schimmel from ArtVault





This page: The plants form a living curtain that cleverly conceals the massive steel beams that enable the light and open quality of the architecture

Opposite page: The master bedroom opens out to its own internal courtyard, and is furnished with the Elementi table lamp by Elisa Ossino and Yak sofa from De Padova, and an artwork by Candice Kramer; a Paipaï armchair by LucidiPevere for Ligne Roset is dressed in a velvet fabric that channels the verdant tones in the courtyard





included—are on the level above. The clarity and apparent simplicity of the design is, inevitably, a wonder of engineering, ranging from massive, brutishly strong post-tensioned beams—so well hidden by cascading plants that you’d never even know they were there—to a lounge floor suspended by a steel hanger from the ceiling above it that seems to defy gravity.

Day says the carefully controlled palette of interior finishes was selected for its natural and highly tactile attributes. Orelowitz speaks of wanting “sensory feedback” when you touch surfaces throughout the house, from the walls to the floors. He says it’s a quality he finds rejuvenating. The rough sensuality of the stone, the lushness of the plants and the elemental presence of the air and water lean away from the minimalism of European modernism and in the direction of the sensual tropical modernism with its early origins in Brazil.

The tactile dimension and natural qualities bring a certain earthiness inside, enhanced by the daylight that enters the house, and the way that air flows over a pond and up through a skylight. The slatted timber cladding that wraps the walls and ceilings has door and window frames so precisely integrated into it as to make the thresholds imperceptible. The highly bespoke lighting is concealed and designed so that come nightfall, the quality

of light inside and out is consistent; and the effect is magical.

Orelowitz playfully compares the house to Hogwarts School in the popular Harry Potter book and movie franchise, referring to the secret passages and moveable staircases in the fictional school. He describes it more as a system than a set structure. “You’ve got hidden passages and concealed spaces behind spaces,” he says. The ways in which the walls and screens can be opened or closed in this house mean that it can also be quite magically reconfigured. It is forever shifting and changing shape. “It’s quite theatrical in a way,” adds Orelowitz.

The app-controlled automated skylight that’s about 20m long and 3m wide, which runs the length of the front of the house, adds to the magical effect. “The walls are made of plants,” points out Orelowitz, referring to a vertical garden along the length of the first floor.

Day continued this sense of surprise and discovery throughout the interiors, particularly in the ways she detailed cabinets and wall panelling to conceal storage and even

entire rooms. She favours low-slung designs, often light, fairly transparent pieces that do not “break” the views and the sense of continuous space: “there’s nothing that interrupts the eye.”

Natural textures are picked up in the fabrics, conveying a sense of grounded, authentic materiality. The colours are drawn from the water, the foliage, the sky and the stone to “marry inside and out as one space”. To maintain the sense of simplicity, subtle variations in colour, texture and material—the same granite hammered in some places but sandblasted in other spots—keep it from appearing monotonous or sterile.

Day quotes Vico Magistretti, who designed several of her favourite furniture pieces, some of which are included in the house: “Simplicity is the hardest thing to obtain.” It’s an effect more than a set of rules. The secret, however, remains in the detailing, in being able to sustain a clear vision from the “big idea” right through to the tiniest detail. “Can you make your home your favourite space in the city?” asks Orelowitz. The open courtyard at the heart of this abode is an invitation to do so.





Left to right: The master bathroom is furnished with understated pieces such as the Ligne Roset Estenda clothes stand by Busetti Garuti Redaelli, the Sen occasional tables by Kensaku Oshiro for De Padova, and a sculpture by Angus Taylor, placed on a wooden plinth; the staircase balustrade is designed with square steel planters that house succulents, transforming something mundane into a delight; this guest room is connected to a beautifully planted bathroom, which can be completely opened to the sky via an app-controlled, automated skylight

“This house playfully melds hidden passages with entertainment areas in the style of an “adult treehouse”



IN GRAND STYLE

Inspired by luxury hotels, celebrity couple Awal Ashaari and Scha Al-Yahya's home combines tasteful design with a real sense of character

By Han Ng. Photography by David Yeow







This glamorous take on the modern classic style is home to celebrity couple Awal Ashaari and Scha Al-Yahya. They brought their discerning tastes to bear in creating a residence that is at once welcoming, elegant, and full of personality. Located in a gated community in Kuala Lumpur, the semi-detached house occupies 4,800 sq ft of built-up space and has grown to be a well-loved home for the husband and wife, their two daughters, and their two cats.

PERSONAL BEST

The design process was a labour of love for the couple. During the planning stages, budgetary considerations led them to decide that they would manage without ID consultants. This turned out to be exactly the right decision since they were able to give full expression to their personal tastes. There was some trepidation, of course; as Scha explains: “we were not well-versed in architecture”. However, Awal adds, “we both knew what we wanted”, and the couple relished the challenge of giving the house “a total makeover”.



Left to right: Awal Ashaari and Scha Al-Yahya; the living room is a tasteful tableau of neutrals punctuated by bright prints

Previous spread: Natural light streams into the elegant dining room



Clockwise from right: The wet kitchen was outfitted with stainless steel fixtures; a marble island was included in the dining room; the dry kitchen with its blush coloured cabinets





“Awal is more detail-oriented while I am actually more instinctive in choosing things”

The benefit of working together was that Awal and Scha complemented each other's approaches while also nudging each other in new directions. Scha shares that “Awal is more detail-oriented while I am actually more instinctive in choosing things”. Scha admits that she tends to be more minimalist, but in the end, was surprised by how much she loved the eventual opulent style.

The direction that they ultimately agreed on was to emulate the look and feel of high-end hotels. According to Awal, there was a natural lead-up to this inspiration: “we used to live in a townhouse which was compact and basic, so we wanted something totally different.” The hotel idea was a perfect fit because, as Awal explains, “we travel so much and have stayed in so many beautiful hotels”.

PUT TOGETHER

In order to evoke the classic polish of a luxury hotel, the design had to be coherent in its use of repeated elements. One such element is the wainscoting that is found in many rooms throughout the house: this panelling does require a lot of maintenance, but it adds a subtle texture to the walls and binds the spaces together. A similar function is fulfilled by the





This page: The pink built ins and monochromatic wallpaper make for a chic kid's room

Opposite page, from top: The masterbedroom is a sophisticated mix of furniture; Scha's "attic" has a mysterious air



ceiling cornices, which add their own rhythmic flair. Then there is the sense of gravity that is imparted by the recurrent use of darker tones, such as in the floors of the living room and the master bedroom.

The continuity of the background elements provides a context for the different personalities of each space. There is a whole range here: from the scholarly charm of Awal's study to the more muted formality of the family areas. Awal's study, which is also his 'man cave' is lined with wallpaper depicting books and has a skylight that illuminates this slim, wood-panelled space. The kitchen areas, meanwhile, are not just focal points for the whole house but also serve as a showcase for Awal's cooking skills. The dry kitchen has SMEG ovens, elegant marble cladding as splash back, calm black-and-white mosaic floors, and blush-coloured cabinetry, which adds a touch of femininity. The wet kitchen has a more assertive personality, decked out as it is in commercial kitchen style, with stainless steel finishes and hanging copper pots.





The outdoor terrace decked out with relaxed yet chic King Living furniture is a favourite spot for both husband and wife. Awal loves that “it’s so chill”, and Scha appreciates that it is a “quiet” space. This balcony, surrounded by the greenery of treetops, is clearly a sanctuary for the busy couple.

FURNISHING TOUCHES

“The thing I love the most,” Scha enthuses, “is the colour palette!” And no wonder: the choice of furnishings and details means that there is a balance between tasteful neutral hues and pops of brighter tones. Thus, there are the hushed silvers, greys and beiges of the pieces from King Living – which include the Jasper sofa in the family area, the aforementioned outdoor furniture on the terrace, and the modern four-poster bed with its high King Living Sleep+ mattress in the master bedroom. In the living room, characterful touches of colour and texture are added by the Lacroix Home throw cushions from Janine.

The play on texture and form is carried over into the selection of wallpaper in certain rooms. In the powder room, there is a whimsical Cole & Son print representing fish.

In the attic dressing room, the slanted roof is decorated with an ornate and intricate pattern. Scha explains that this particular choice felt risky but was ultimately worth it: “I decided to be bold and go with it – it has a mysterious air”.

The couple always opted for the very best, whether it was Christian Lacroix Maison wallpaper for the family area or Janine wallpaper for the daughters’ bedrooms.

Originally, their older daughter had actually requested for her bedroom to be papered in pink, but the couple thought better of it. A compromise was made.

As Scha recounts: “we didn’t want pink wallpaper that they could grow out of, so we went for pink beds”.

This was just another instance where the overall design of the house became a part of this family’s charming story.

This page: Tigo the cat enjoys the King Living Delta Outdoor Circle sofa

Opposite page: Scha’s favourite spot in the house in the outdoor terrace decked out in King Living Outdoor furniture





THE SUNNY SIDE

This sandcastle-inspired vacation home in Florida basks in the beauty of its beachside location while subtly celebrating its eighties influences

By Karen Tee. Photography by William Abranowicz





When it comes to a holiday home by the beach, function can sometimes take precedence over form. After all, it is essential to ensure the durability of the building in the face of environmental factors such as heat and humidity. But this wasn't the case with American architect Jeffrey Dungan, who considered both factors equally while building this sandcastle-inspired house for a family in Alys Beach, Florida.

Dungan had to incorporate a strict design direction and work within specific constraints that the town's architects had previously laid out—he says this actually allowed him to be even more creative in his approach to building the home. The result is a strikingly stylish 5,500 sq ft abode with a private pool set in a courtyard that features curves and arches on its stucco facade. A predominantly white palette keeps the abode's overall appearance restrained and subtle.

“I view the aesthetic of this house as a little sandcastle, as we used a lot of soft curvatures in the exterior walls and rounded edges rather than 90-degree ones,” says Dungan of his design approach. “A good house always tells a story. The story begins with the exterior and continues inside, but inside it becomes more layered and intimate.”

A light palette anchors the design scheme with the addition of wood detailing in the rafters, wall panelling and floors to soften the space and create an “inviting and comfortable” warmth. “I also implemented a terrazzo floor that is cool to the touch in such a hot environment so that it feels refreshing. At the same time, this flooring is also great with wet bathing suits and teenage kids,” he says.

Left to right: A cosy mix of materials including oak wood, stone and linen augments the relaxed atmosphere of this beach house; the terrazzo flooring helps to keep the home cool on warm days

Previous spread: The white stucco facade presents a modern and imaginative take on sandcastles; the use of dark wood offers a pleasing contrast against the light-hued scheme









Clockwise from opposite page: Pale wood and neutral tones imbue an airy dining nook with a sense of calm; plants and other organic textures bring this charming corner to life; a weathered console lends a rustic touch to this hallway

With the sun in Florida shining brightly all year round, Dungan paid careful attention to the amount of light and heat the house would be exposed to. Since the property is oriented precisely on an east-west axis, he designed much of the facade along a northwards orientation because the sun rarely shines directly through that direction. “We used this to create a home that has a lot of natural light—but it is actually reflected light—so it does not have the negative effect of too much heat coming inside the home,” he explains.

To introduce even more natural light in an unexpected manner, Dungan created a stair access made of glass that connects to the third-floor roof terrace to form a light well that illuminates the second floor during the day. To further bring the ethereally elegant atmosphere to life, interior designer Ohara Davies-Gaetano strove to add layers of surfaces and textures through the use of natural materials such as linen fabrics and plaster walls to evoke a “dappled light” effect.

“Since this is a beach home, the desire was to create an indoor-outdoor lifestyle and to maximise the exterior spaces,” she says. “The way Jeff Dungan brought the exterior living spaces into the home by allowing the kitchen



and living room to completely open up to the courtyard and the pool not only makes you feel more connected to the exterior, but also emphasises the scale of both the interior and exterior spaces, allowing everything to feel more expansive.”

In the living room, inviting oversized sofas clad in Lee Industries fabrics and a coffee table from Clubcu offer a comfortable respite for quiet contemplation during the day, while also performing double duty as an entertainment hub when friends and relatives drop by.

“Since you see the dining room from the entry corridor of the home, I wanted the space to feel inviting. At the same time, as our clients love to cook and entertain, the dining room needed to be functional and casual. The design of the kitchen was also essential

“The desire was to create an indoor- outdoor lifestyle”





Clockwise from opposite page: This bedroom portrays a restful tableau with its plush mix of neutral-toned fabrics and soft furnishings; the curved architectural design is echoed by the rounded forms of the furniture within; white plaster walls highlight the ethereal feel of the abode





Clockwise from opposite page: A water feature adds to the calming atmosphere by the pool; more views of the exterior and its playful spin on sandcastles; plush outdoor seating options encourage the owners and their guests to sit back and soak in the sun's rays



as the space had to be a comfortable gathering place,” says Davies-Gaetano.

To achieve an aura of conviviality, a custom banquet was carved into the kitchen counter so guests could mingle effortlessly with the hosts as they bustle about the space. A separate countertop with open shelving for stemware features an artfully curated bar; an open invitation for anyone to mix up a tippie or two should the mood strike.

In contrast, Davies-Gaetano sought to create the opposite effect in the master suite, which is clad in neutral tones and natural fabrics for a cocooning effect. In the primary bathroom, a freestanding Currey & Company bathtub, set within a marble-covered arched nook, establishes the tone for some indulgent me-time. “The primary suite feels calm and dreamy, and is a sanctuary for reconnecting and unwinding from the hectic pace of life,” she says.

Reflecting on the project, Dungan says: “I think the whole reason we love the beach is getting outside and enjoying the sun and ocean breeze. I hoped to create a home that aided in this continued enjoyment, but in a more private way. By using walled courtyards, we were able to extend the interior spaces towards the outdoors, hence opening up the house without losing privacy.”



DOUBLE FEATURE

These light-filled houses combine nuance, sculptural elements, and a concern for sustainability *By Han Ng. Photography by David Yeow*





Left to right: A view from the top of the staircase; the helical pearl



Clockwise from top left: Sunlight filters into the staircase; a glimpse of blue skies; beautiful lines

Opposite page, from top: The kitchen and living room are a wide open space; the sweeping staircase can be viewed from the outside

The bold geometry employed here was all in service of creating a multi-generational family residence. Kenny Chong of A3 Projects explains that the entire project was ultimately about ‘addressing human interaction on varying scales’.

Chong had previously worked with the clients, a pair of siblings, on their company’s corporate office. He was delighted when they approached him to design a pair of structures that would be home to their respective families as well as to their ageing parents. Chong relished the challenge of coordinating between the various stakeholders while still ‘putting together the big picture and maintaining a coherent design direction’. What resulted were two houses that represent the very best in sustainable modernity: the Light Box and the Helical Pearl.

PRIDE OF PLACE

Located on sloping terrain, the site nestles against a picturesque forest backdrop and overlooks a valley basin within the township of Meru Valley, Ipoh. The houses’ exteriors enter into a dialogue with their surroundings: as Chong explains, ‘cuboid forms are juxtaposed and staggered across the slopes, capitalising on the topography.’ In fact, the visual impact of







Left to right: The light box is true to its name; shadows filter through the trees



these structures emerges from the constraints of the site itself. Thus, Chong shares, ‘a split level approach coupled with a deep ground-level recess allowed for the buildings to be visually elevated’.

There was ample room to stretch out on this location: the Light Box occupies 7,070 sq ft of built-up space, while the Helical Pearl has a recorded build-up of 8,166 sq ft. Both have core family areas that are adjacent to the extensive shared lawn. According to Chong, ‘this allows for visual continuity and provides the convenience of organising both indoor and outdoor activities’.

The structures and the setting also interact to address issues of privacy. Both houses present more solid, opaque fronts to the main thoroughfare; however, in the rear, wide fenestrations with deep recesses open up onto sweeping views of lush greenery.

NAME IN LIGHTS

The individuality of each house is clearly indicated by their respective names. As far as design is concerned, the Light Box is the more understated of the two. By day, the Light Box counteracts the harsh glare of the sun by diffusing daylight through rows of vaulted ceilings that adorn the underside of its roof. The result is a gentle glow throughout the day.

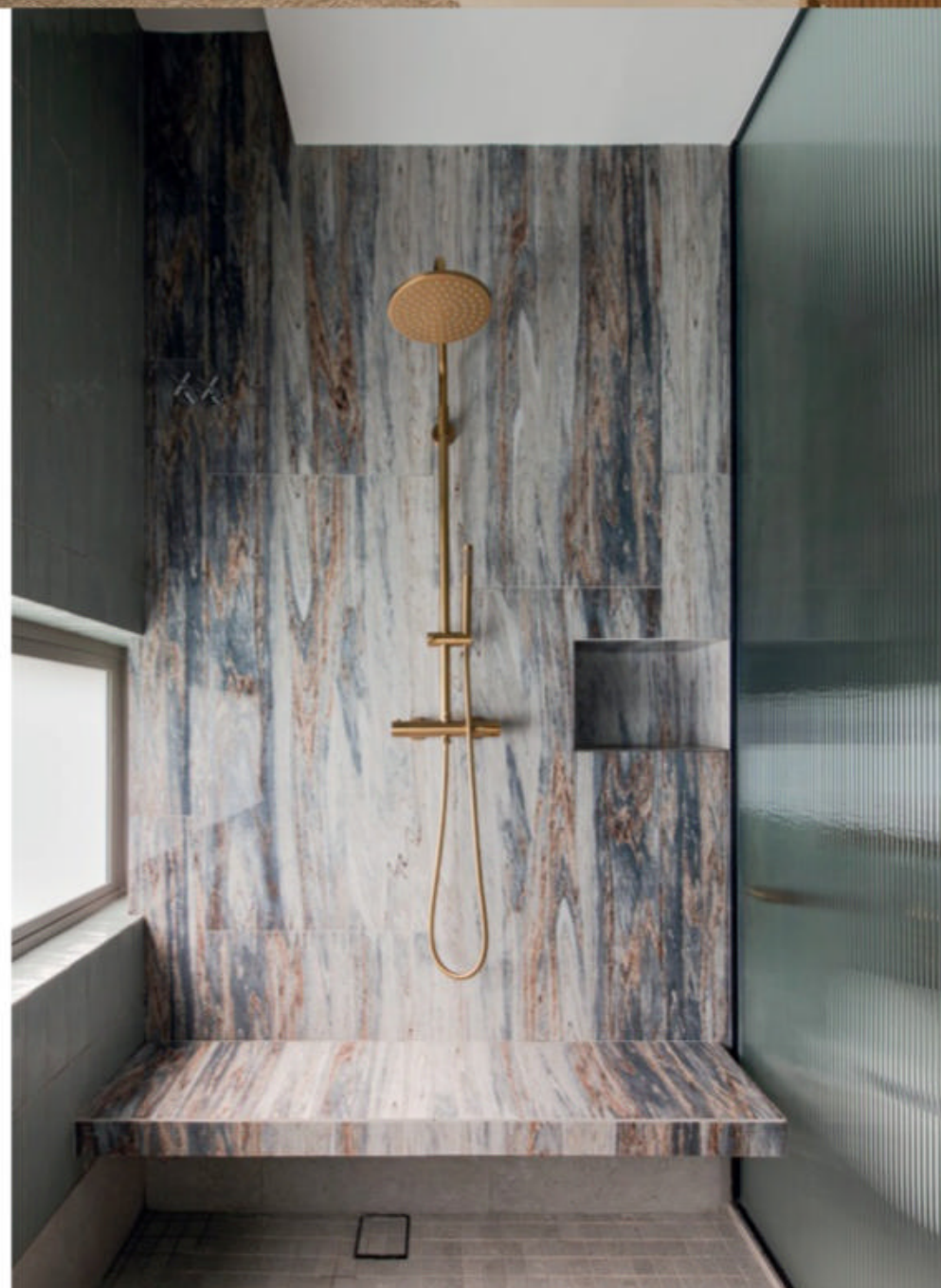


By night, the Light Box comes into its own as it becomes a translucent light box that casts its luminosity, lantern-like, onto the surroundings. Lighting was actually such an important consideration for the whole project that the design team specially engaged local carpenters to install several bespoke pendant light fittings.

The Helical Pearl is more experimental in the way that it features a truly spectacular flight of stairs in its atrium. This spiralling helix swoops vertiginously up three stories. The dramatic curves impart a dynamic sense of movement to the atrium and define this space as a place to gather and make memories. At the top of the flight of stairs is a circular skylight which, as Chong describes it, ‘appears precariously perched over a seemingly razor-thin surface imparting a tense reaction which gradually dissipates as the reflective pond counteracts and conveys a calming sense’.

LIGHT AS AIR

Sustainability is at the very centre of A3 Project’s practice, and it shows. Chong notes that ‘both houses feature extensive yet thoughtful passive architectural design strategies’.



Clockwise from top left: Panoramic views from the generously proportioned openings; brass details in the bathroom

Opposite page: The family area in the Light Box

“The Light Box counteracts the harsh glare of the sun by diffusing daylight through rows of vaulted ceilings”



Clockwise from top:
The front of the home is more closed up; recycled bricks

Opposite page: Interior courtyards are a recurring feature



Of utmost concern was that the residence felt cool, open and airy. Both houses feature large window openings and high-level apertures which encourage effective cross-ventilation. The double-cavity brick walls applied throughout the external skin also mitigate the worst effects of the tropical climate by preventing excessive heat gain.

Interior courtyards feature prominently in both houses: these spaces promote air circulation and thus regulate the internal environment. Ventilation slits and perforated aluminium screens were introduced throughout to allow uninterrupted breezes while also creating a shifting display of light and shadow. Chong adds that in both houses, ‘decorative glazed tile of varying tones give pixelated-styled reflections of the environment.’

Ultimately, the Light Box and the Helical Pearl succeed in bringing together the different perspectives that make up this family. There was a coherent design approach, but each family still expressed its own personality. Chong shares that he was happy to have given expression to both families - ‘one with its inner explorative spirit and the other which wanted a cosy and homely setup.’



RETRO REWIND



French interior designer Fabrice Juan pairs his mid-century influences with the uplifting effects of colour to create this inviting Parisian apartment *By Hong Xinying. Photography by Francis Amiand*



Clockwise from top left:

The entryway is furnished with a bench and console by Fabrice Juan Éditions, a Kiko Lopez mirror and a table lamp from Aerin; the Roche Bobois Pulp dining table is paired with chairs from Marc de Berny Éditions; various objects and vases line the top shelf in the kitchen, adding a dose of fun to the space; the chevron pattern on the Angelino dresser by Fabrice Juan Éditions stands in contrast to the rounded forms of the soft furnishings

Previous spread: A bright yellow artwork by Jef Geys anchors the look of the living room

Contrary to the usual coming-of-age narrative for designers, Fabrice Juan started his creative journey first as a carpenter. The French talent then discovered an interest in interior design, and honed his aesthetic sense and skills by working as a project manager at design maestro Jean-Louis Deniot's eponymous firm for 10 years. That fateful decade of experience spurred Juan to start a studio of his own.

"By combining classic and contemporary codes, I try to create interiors that embody luxury, with special attention to detail, playing with volumes, materials and colours, always maintaining a timeless aesthetic," says the interior designer, whose carpentry training continues to inform his firm's keen focus on craftsmanship and handmade details.

This 3,014 sq ft apartment in Paris perfectly encapsulates his creative philosophy while creating a sumptuous interior for the American homeowners. Located in an exclusive enclave dubbed as the Golden Triangle that's in close proximity to the Champs-Élysées boutiques, this property on the Right Bank is now a plush space that make it a place the couple are proud to call their home.

The clients wanted the kitchen to be the centre of their abode and left the other details in the good hands of the design team. "They wanted to be surprised by the result without having too much information beforehand," shares Juan. "I wanted to create a home with a strong personality by introducing a contemporary touch and a range of bold colours. For this project, my inspiration came from the 1960s and '70s, combined with pops of colour in a Latin spirit. This apartment was conceived and designed to savour moments of sharing, but also of privacy, skilfully fusing functionality with bold aesthetic choices."

The entryway presents a warm welcome with terracotta-red walls. The flooring comprises a geometric gridwork of oak, stone and travertine, recalling the intricacy









From top: Bands of red grosgrain ribbon on the walls add a graphic edge to this bedroom; French interior designer Fabrice Juan

Opposite page: In the master bedroom, a sculpture by Marc Uzan echoes the diagonal lines on the custom bench and the grosgrain ribbon details on the wall; the Saint-Germain bench by Fabrice Juan Éditions is dressed in a yellow fabric from Misia; the master bathroom's symmetrical design incorporates a pair of Melange sconces by Kelly Wearstler and George mirrors, also designed by Juan

and craftsmanship of aristocratic abodes in the city. A large mirror from Kiko Lopez amplifies the vastness of the space, while a row of spotlights enhance its modern look. The doors to the connecting common rooms have been removed to improve spatial flow.

The open-plan living and dining room is the only space that has retained the apartment's original architectural elements. These include the original cornices and Hungarian wood parquet flooring. "We wanted to bring a neoclassical feel to this space, so we created a vaulted ceiling to match the existing cornice," says Juan. The living area is flanked by a pair of marble fireplaces from the 19th century. The walls here are painted in a grey marmorino stucco finish to recall the majesty of Italian renaissance-era palaces.

Juan's namesake furniture line, Fabrice Juan Éditions, taps into his carpentry background and gives his interior design clients the option to have unique pieces and accessories in their abode; it's the case for this home, too. The bespoke pieces include furnishings in the living room, such as the Pac Man coffee table, Angel Rug, Glove sofa and Odyssée armchairs, all of which are colour-matched to feature complementary earthy tones.

Most of the soft furnishings designed by Juan are dressed in upholstery fabrics from French textile house Misia. These are accompanied by loose pieces such as the Zephyr floor lamp by



American design maven Kelly Wearstler and sculptures by French artist Julie Bergeron.

Designed to be the heart of the home, the kitchen is done in a way that is elegant, understated and convivial. A central island with a red travertine top is finished in brushed stainless steel; its warm shade is referenced on the brick-red lacquered shelves that are lined with an eclectic mix of objects. A combination of light oak cabinetry and light marble flooring accompanies the pleasing tableau, while the

rounded form of the Gargia bench seating and the Massimo oval dining table stand in contrast to the angular lines on the joinery.

Past the communal areas, the other rooms take on the deeper and richer hues. The four bedrooms are located on both sides of the entrance hall, with each fully carpeted room designed to have its own identity and colour scheme. The walls in bedrooms also feature bands of grosgrain ribbon in different configurations, appearing like a little accessory or sartorial detail that you might find on the lapels of a tuxedo or on a gown.

Completed in 10 months, the owners adore the look of their apartment and enjoy using the culinary zone, which has become the centre of their abode. “It’s important that they feel at home from the very first moment they look at it,” says Juan. “All put together, it forms a joyous ensemble; an expression of that French love for good food and good living.” Indeed, that has come true in this cosy sanctuary, which epitomises feelings of comfort, elegance and calm.

Left to right: Coulée, an oil painting by Diane Benoit du Rey, is among the artworks in the home sourced by the designer from galleries in Paris and around the world; a vibrant vase designed by Juan adds a pop of colour to this bedroom, which also features the Serax Earth table lamp and double-lined curtains from Villa Nova





“All put together, it forms a joyous ensemble; an expression of that French love for good food and good living”





NOW AND ZEN

Elegance and restraint combine to create
a light-filled and texturally-varied space

By Han Ng. Photography by David Yeow





This page, from top:
Sculptural shapes in a deliberately minimal palette; the layered staircase made with Cosentino

Opposite page: A sculptural tableau

Previous spread: An open plan living space; the house exterior

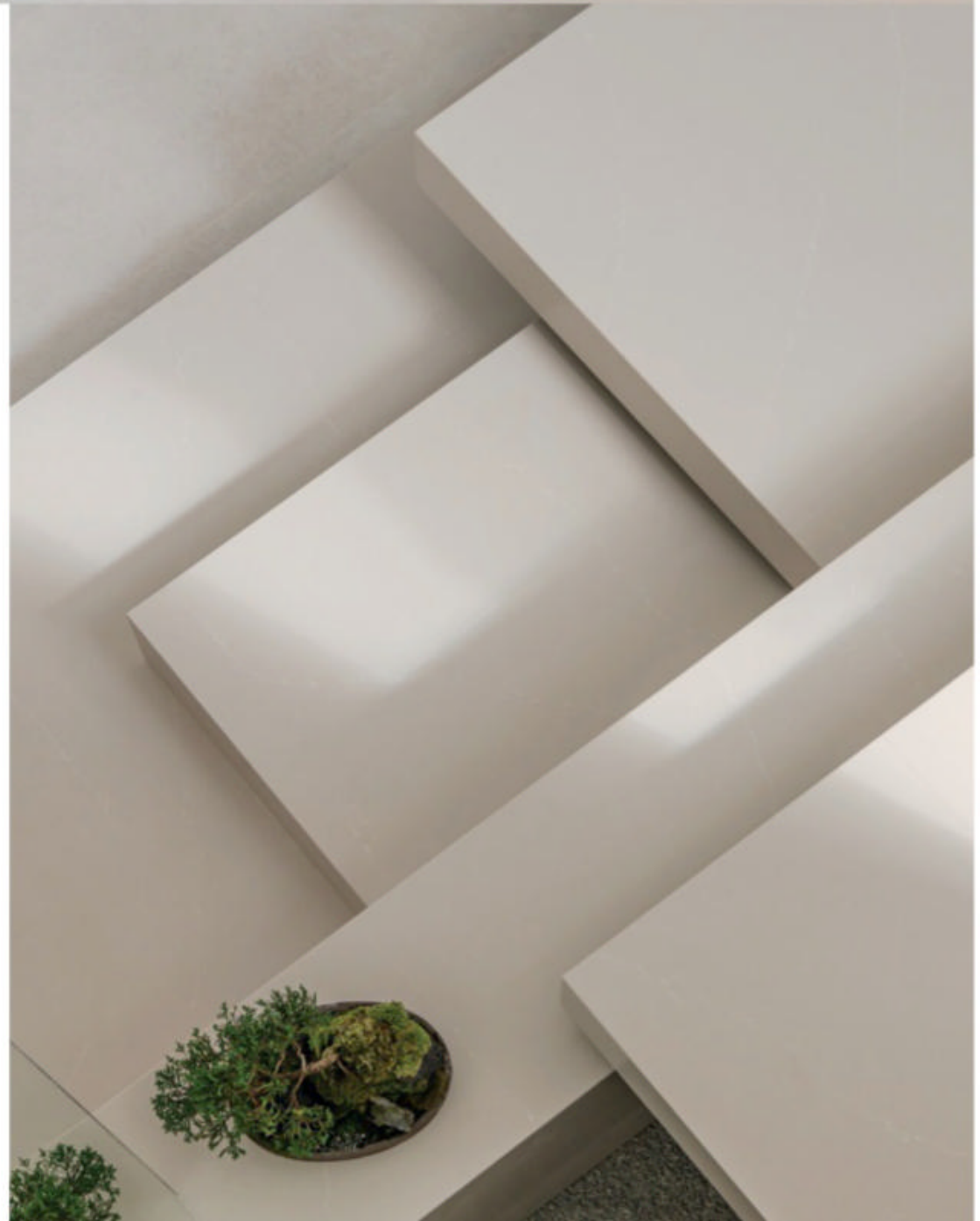


A luminous sense of calm pervades this residence in Selangor. The owner's hectic work schedule meant that he was in need of a home where he could feel at ease for long stretches of time. DualSpace Studio answered this brief by carefully drawing together various design elements to create a sanctuary for the owner and his two sons. In their own words, DualSpace came to the conclusion that "the most suitable concept was a modern and tranquil design with a hint of zen."

LIGHT TOUCH

An important consideration that DualSpace had to keep in mind was the fact that the owner of the residence is colour-blind. There was a lot of collaboration involved in selecting materials and colours that suited both the owner's visual world and the studio's own design principles.

Lew Yong Wei, co-founder and co-lead designer with Wong Yee Liz, elaborates: "We had to go through several rounds of trial and error, to adjust the colours of the 3D visuals and materials according to the client's colour spectrum, in order to understand how different this looked compared to our own perception."





It is no surprise that constraints on colour meant that light came to play an essential role in imparting a sense of character to the various spaces. The whole structure comes alive through the modulating qualities of natural light. Sunbeams flow in through the curved ridges of textured glass at the landing; a soft glow diffuses through the sheer curtains in the dining room; sharper clarity is offered by strategically-situated windows; and the gleaming white of many of the surfaces provides a canvas for the play of shifting light and shadow.

The light fixtures fall in line with the clean, minimalist aesthetic. Wherever possible, DualSpace went for discreet and lightweight options. Thus, rather than using heavier elements to mark out distinct areas, they used long stretches of ceiling lights to imply the separation between the wet and dry kitchens (the functional spaces) from the living, dining, and tea areas (the spaces for relaxation and leisure). Another instance of subtlety is the skylight in the tea area. LEDs were hidden around the opening so that the natural light of day could be seamlessly replaced by electric lighting at nightfall.

SPATIAL AWARENESS

The light-filled airiness of the whole residence is enabled by the open layout of the design. While the current built-up area occupies about 5,000 sq ft, the original structure was 1,000 sq ft smaller and was encumbered by

Clockwise, from top left: Floating shelves; a harmonious and neutral palette; a small corner with natural materials; built ins for storage; light blocks filter natural light in





Left to right: Sculptural shapes catch the eye; mirrored columns were added



extraneous walls and divisions. “It felt narrow and confined,” Lew shares. By removing these barriers, they freed up the whole layout, thereby introducing a more natural flow of movement, lengthening view lines, and allowing for more ventilation. When the glass doors at the dining area and the tea area are opened, there is enough of a cooling breeze that there is no need for air conditioning.

The subtle variations in the choice of materials complement the overall design approach. Matte surface tiles were selected for the flooring, so that some of the reflected light was softened and muted. Micro-cement was used for the walls at the tea area and on the walls next to the 2-storey glass block. Yet another

textural quality was achieved with the staircase through the use of durable, ultra-compact Cosentino stone imported from Spain.

A combination of refinement and ease is apparent down to the smallest details. For instance, the kitchen cabinets have wooden frames that elegantly double as handles. Then there is the sink in the dry kitchen, which sustains a visual simplicity due to its shallow appearance, but whose base is removable when required. As for the furniture, the selection was carefully curated. Many pieces were sourced from Australia; some (including the dining table, coffee table, and bench at the tea area) were custom-made; while the dining chairs were handmade in Malaysia.



FLOATING WORLD

Ultimately, the staircase area has emerged as one of the design team's favourite parts of the whole project. This is in no small part due to the way in which all the design elements converge here: from the relationships between the different materials to the irregular sizes of the steps; from the generosity of both the vertical and horizontal dimensions to the floating steps, which allow light to filter in through the gaps. It is only right that the bright serenity of this space is bordered by a Japanese rock garden, where concentric ring patterns in the pebbles allude playfully to water.

As for the owner, the residence not only satisfied his preferences and taste but also "helped him to have a more comfortable lifestyle with the flow of the space."

"They freed up the whole layout, thereby introducing a more natural flow of movement"



Clockwise from left: Details like the branch-like clothes rail were included; serene corners can be found throughout the home; the floating staircase is a key feature; black bedside lamps match the side tables

Opposite page: Wood was favoured in the bedrooms as well







EPHEMERAL BEAUTY

Thexton Smith Interiors transforms this 4,800 sq ft penthouse into a bespoke home that makes the most of its panoramic views of Marina Bay while thoughtfully anticipating the future

By Asih Jenie. Photography by Marcus L Photography



Clockwise from top left: The sitting room is styled with outdoor pieces from Castlery upholstered in water-repellent textiles that make the off-white soft furnishings more durable; a ceiling-hung glass installation draws attention to the lofty height of the living area; a sculptural coffee table and a backlit cabinet showcasing prized bottles bring visual flair to this nook

Previous spread: Styled with floral arrangements from Charlotte Puxley, the grand living area looks out to calming views of the sea; accent cushions add texture and colour to the home's largely neutral canvas

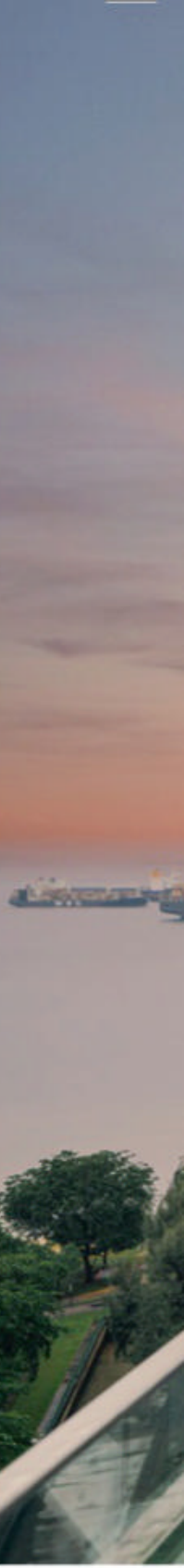
Designing an interior of a rented luxury property is a delicate balancing act. How do you fulfil your client's brief while creating something worthy of the premium footprint and taking account of its temporary nature? One could argue that the designer's task is made even more challenging because it needs to be memorable and impressive during this transitional period. Thexton Smith Interiors shows how it's done at this penthouse on Singapore's south-eastern coast.

Home to a couple and their teenage son, the sprawling 4,800 sq ft penthouse has four bedrooms, four bathrooms, and a panoramic view of the sea and the glittering Marina Bay cityscape. The husband works in finance, while the wife works in the fashion industry. Although they only took a two-year lease on the penthouse, they wanted the interior design to be timeless and truly embody their lifestyle. They returned to Thexton Smith Interiors—who designed one of their previous homes—for a fresh design.

"They loved how they could express themselves with me and how I am as crazy and as adventurous as they are," shares Hafi Hakim. He is the co-founder and director of Thexton Smith Interiors, a Singapore-based sister company of Melbourne architectural firm Thexton Smith; the designer currently splits his time between the two cities.









Left to right: A set of blue velvet dining chairs forms plush seating that also contributes to the luxurious look of the living and dining areas; styled with outdoor furnishings from Konopi Singapore, the spacious balcony invites one to sit back and take in the scenic vista

“Our creative philosophy is to be unafraid to be bold, to break boundaries of what the norm might be, and to express ourselves through design,” adds Hafi.

The full turnkey project took five months to complete. “This included the initial design conceptualisation stage, material selections, bespoke furnishings, construction documentation, interior styling services, as well as full project management from start to finish,” shares the designer. The focus areas included the open-plan living and dining room, the balconies, master bedroom, master bathroom, son’s bedroom as well as the staircase area.

The clients work from and conduct their businesses from home. Thus, their design brief had three key practical considerations. Firstly, the home must be an impressive place to entertain guests, as a place that wows them the moment they step inside. Secondly, it must also provide a calm and comfortable sanctuary outside of their office hours. The third was the ease of maintenance. This consideration focused on their teenage son, who should be able to invite his friends over without making

his parents worry about accidental spills on furnishings as they eat and drink, among other wear and tear.

And, of course, there was the fact that the penthouse is a rented property. “This was a huge challenge to us as a few of our initial concepts were rejected by the landlord. So we had to go back to the drawing board multiple times,” shares the designer. “We also had to make sure that everything we did added value to the property, and any additions could be removed easily without disrupting the integrity of the apartment.” Fortunately, in the team’s expert hands, this constraint yielded some innovative design solutions.

The interior’s architectural shell is predominantly white to highlight its spectacular view. Pops of colours come from the decor, which can be adjusted as desired. “The home’s neutral palette meant that every artisan that has curated the pieces in this project had to work at the highest level, as any imperfection would be apparent and obvious,” adds Hafi.

A sculptural light installation comprising thousands of glass rods creates a sense of wave-like movement in the double-height





Clockwise from top left: Gold trimmings and mirrored details enhance the sense of space and luxury in the master bedroom; the cabinetry cleverly conceals the vanity area when it is not in use; bright accent cushions add a dose of fun to the four-poster bed; the light and bright master bathroom is the perfect place to enjoy a leisurely soak in the tub

“We wanted to not only create an ode to nature but also respect it”

living room. Taking eight people and almost a week to install, the rods are made of 97 per cent sustainable materials, so the installation is recyclable. “This was very important to both my client and me. We wanted to not only create an ode to nature but also respect it,” says the designer. This visual feast also provides talking points for hosts and guests during all the soirees underneath it.

The furnishings have a light touch. All of the built-in carpentry is modular and can be moved to fit new spaces in the future with minimal wastage. The carefully curated new furniture comprises loose pieces that can be easily transported and reconfigured. As the house is rectilinear, Hafi incorporated curves and organic shapes to soften the look and feel of the space.

Meanwhile, the finishes were chosen for both their look and durability. The boucle fabric upholstery on the living room’s Castlery sofas and armchairs is water-repellent. Spilled liquid would bead on its surface, making it easier to wipe without staining it while adding a luxe texture to the space. Gucci’s green Heron wallpaper, paired with daffodil-yellow walls, enlivens the previously dark staircase, which leads to the bedrooms on the upper floor.

Overall, Thexton Smith has crafted a well-thought-out space that fulfils the clients’ brief, anticipates their future moves, and ensures that they live their best lives worthy of the enviable location.

This luxurious Penang penthouse
combines a sense of scale with perfectly-
chosen details *By Han Ng. Photography by Teh Weng Jen*

PEAK



EXPERIENCE





For Mixy Ooi, managing director of Vault Design, this project was all about sculpting the space to match the personas and lifestyle of its owners, a married couple who travel widely and who have a predilection for classic designer brands. The residence had to live up, for instance, to the wife's extensive collection of designer scarves (including pieces by Louis Vuitton, Christian Dior and Hermes). It became clear, Mixy explains, that she would have to create a home that was "intimate, elegant and sumptuous".

The penthouse itself made for a breathtaking setting. Located in Tanjong Tokong, Penang, the 5,000 sq ft condominium is surrounded by landed property and overlooks spectacular views. The renovation itself turned out to be a massive but necessary undertaking. In its original state, the penthouse was fully furnished and had heavy teak wood veneers that just did not suit the couple's aesthetic. The design team would have to strip this all away and start from scratch.





This page: An elegant colour palette in tactile materials

Opposite page, clockwise from top: Wainscotting adds textural contrast; details add visual interest

Previous spread: The living room is understated but luxurious

From top: Dark cabinetry contrasts well against the shades of gray; the open plan living spaces





“The pale-coloured envelope generously reflects ambient light and brightens up the whole space, maximising the visual volume”

THE BIG PICTURE

One important consideration in the redesigning process was to maximise the space. A deliberate effort was made to establish an easy flow to the layout: walls were knocked down to combine rooms, and the bathroom was extended so it would live up to its use as the en-suite to the master bedroom. As Ooi explains, it was not just about space for its own sake: everything had to contribute to the “classical theme” and thus had to be “timeless and majestic”. Even the ratios were carefully calculated so that there was an overall sense of balanced proportionality.

The off-white shade of the walls and wainscoting plays a part in helping to create an expansive spaciousness. Ooi points out that “the pale-coloured envelope generously reflects ambient light and brightens up the whole space, maximising the visual volume.” The choice of wainscoting is consistent with the classic theme: this wood panelling introduces a decorative element while still being elegantly understated.

In order to increase the impression of ample verticality, the design team added a mirror to the hallway ceiling. The reflective surface elaborates Ooi, “creates the illusion of a double height volume.” As it turned out, the mirror proved to be a highly demanding challenge for the installation crew. The length of the hallway meant that it was a complicated task to ensure that the mirror lay perfectly flush against the horizontal plane: minuscule adjustments had to be made to even out all the waves and bends. It was also no trivial task to ensure that the mirror’s edges terminated with exact precision.

FINE LINES

The choice of materials creates a real sense of style. One highlight is the use of stainless steel in PVD coating with a bronze hairline finish. The gleaming polish of this material is used to outline rectangular shapes for the wall panels and also to terminate the edges of shelves. These metallic outlines stand out against the muted hues of the walls and are meant to catch people’s eyes. They thus draw attention to particular pieces of furniture, design details, and are even used for handles and knobs.

The bright metallic sparkle of these geometric lines contrasts with the gentler qualities of natural marble and granite elsewhere. There is a calm, almost liquid, visual



This page: The soothing colour palette continues in the bedroom

Opposite page, clockwise from top left: Marble was favoured in the master bedroom; the glamorous walk-in wardrobe; a private corner for work and zoom calls

impression to the marble of the kitchen island, and there is a coherent expanse of beige marble that extends across the floors of the hall and the living areas. Marble is employed in a more energetic fashion at the entrance foyer: here, three variants of marble are choreographed to create a vibrant first impression as guests step into the house.

IN HARMONY

The curation of the various details brings the whole design composition together. The audio features from Bang & Olufsen are works of art in themselves: Beolab pillars are regally poised in the living room, while an elegant Beosound serves as a powerful multiroom speaker. Meanwhile, an Artemide Yanzi pendant lamp by Neri&Hu brings a touch of playfulness: the lamp and a length of brushed brass form a stylised representation of a swallow (‘yanzi’ in Chinese) perched on a black structure. Another

gorgeous lighting feature is to be found in the hallway, where the main door is flanked by a pair of Bell Lamps from Louis Vuitton’s Objets Nomades collection.

As for the furniture, it was all about customising and also picking pieces that fit in seamlessly with the whole vision. The built-in cabinets received special care from carpenter craftsmen. Furniture textile experts were called in for the upholstery. And loose pieces were mostly sourced from within the region or were exclusive from Timeless Design Sdn Bhd. These included the sofa, armchair, bar stools and dining chairs.

The clients ended up loving the modern classic style of this redesign. They have been able to add their own unique touches to the elegant minimalism of the backdrop. Mixy shares that the couple has made full use of this sumptuous space: “they have been hosting many festive events since they moved in.”





A GRAND NARRATIVE

Australian interior designer Greg Natale transforms a family home on the banks of the Brisbane River into a modern abode with glamorous elements inspired by stately Italian palazzi *By Karen Tee. Photography by Anson Smart*





From the grand arcades of the Colosseum to the baroque-style dome of Saint Peter's Basilica, one of the most iconic elements of classical Italian architecture is its grand arches. So, when Australian interior designer Greg Natale saw a row of arches in the facade of his client's home in Queensland, he was inspired to create a palazzo-style abode for the family.

"The family love Italy and have a personal connection to Florence as they run an art school there, so this inspired me to incorporate the arches into the interior design, giving the owners a little piece of Italy with a 'modern palazzo' feel," he says. This glamorous abode is featured in *The Layered Interior*, a book recently published by Rizzoli featuring a stylish array of projects by the Australian designer.

Using these Italian influences as a starting point, Natale set about incorporating arched elements throughout the three-storey house. Aside from the arched hallways and alcoves, curved furnishings and joinery also echo the sinuous form of the building's interior architecture to create a cohesive and multi-layered aesthetic.

"The arches bring grand and beautiful curves to the design and act as graceful framing devices for the different spaces that can be viewed between them. The use of grey stucco balances their dramatic lines with its cool, calm finish and prevents that 'overkill' factor," he explains. "While the arches at the entrance and in the make-up area are lined with brass finger tiles to create a sense of occasion, elsewhere they are entirely stucco for a more minimal finish."

With its eye-catching array of jewel hues and sprightly patterns, the house features



Opposite page: Australian designer Greg Natale, pictured in the Brisbane home; a Hamilton Conte Ignacio sofa, Molteni&C D.153.1 armchair by Gio Ponti and vintage Minotti open-back lounge chair by Gigi Radice are paired with the Erte New Deco rug designed by Natale

This page: These shelves feature a pleasing colour-coordinated array of books; the Knoll dining chairs by Eero Saarinen mirror the brick-red hue of the ceiling

Previous spread: An Occi console from Fornasetti peeks at visitors in the entryway, while echoing the curvature of the arched portals, the Tom Dixon Plane short chandelier and the Celeste chair by Lara Bohinc; the De Gournay Namban wallpaper in metallic tones makes a statement in the open-plan living and dining area





a richly textured appearance that harks to the glamour of Italian villas.

“The layering encompasses everything from the curves and finishes of the interior architecture to the curated blend of vintage, custom and contemporary furniture, and the artful arrangement of accessories,” says Natale.

At the bar, the arches of the mirror-backed cabinets are a response to the arched portals of the house. In the formal living room and dining area, a fluted ceiling provides another intricate layer of detail and a different play on curves, Natale explains. To create a cosy yet sophisticated ambience in the living room, the space is furnished with vintage pieces and custom designs; these include a vintage Minotti chair and a Gio Ponti-designed chair.

“I think the effectiveness of mixing textures, patterns and materials comes down to the importance of balance and the power of connection. Textured and glossy, geometric and organic, bold and subtle—all these can work together if they are balanced and if there are elements that link between them,” says the designer.

Wallpaper is another dynamic way to bring a touch of wit to interior design. One highlight

Clockwise from top left: These vintage Minotti armchairs by Gigi Radice are among the mid-century pieces sourced for the home; the Gucci Heron wallpaper catches the eye in the master bedroom; gold trimmings continue the glamorous look in the dressing room, with a portal framing a view of the bathtub in the master bathroom; pendant lamps in aged brass from Apparatus Studio add a touch of fun to the kitchen









This page: The playful Cole & Son Chiavi Segrete wallpaper from the Fornasetti Selection collection features antique key motifs and hues that picks up the mustard yellow and gold tones in this bedroom; the same wallpaper is applied to another bedroom but in a different hue to match the rosy tones of the custom velvet headboard; the vibrant kids' room is furnished with the Gebrüder Thonet Vienna Targa modular sofa by GamFratesi and a pair of woven cane lounge chairs from Thayer Coggin

Opposite page: In this bedroom, the Fornasetti Selection Procuratie con vista wallpaper from Cole & Son features an architectural design inspired by St Mark's Square in Venice, while the Gubi Beetle chair and Gräshoppa lamp pick up the pink tones of the bed and bench from Theodore Alexander

is the De Gournay wallpaper in the dining room. "The soaring cranes, set against a copper-and-gold background, create a dramatic mood in this special space. The fact that the shimmering metallic tones can be glimpsed through various arches on this floor adds to the room's 'showstopper' feel, drawing you towards it," says Natale.

Completing the dramatic scene are the Knoll chairs by Eero Saarinen, upholstered in a brick-red velvet fabric that draws warmth from the stucco ceiling above. Up in the master bedroom, birds appear again in the form of Gucci's Heron wallpaper. "These birds provide a witty link to the gorgeous cranes downstairs, but in a lighter palette befitting the bedroom's pale scalloped ceiling," he explains.

In another bedroom, Fornasetti wallpaper, which features a playful version of the arched facades of the buildings in Venice's famed Saint Mark's Square, showcases how architecture, culture and decorative elements are interwoven in the house to create an impact.

In contrast to the exuberance of the wallpapered rooms, spaces such as the kitchen







This page: A Willy Rizzo dining table sourced from 1stdibs.com is placed on the Delaunay rug by Greg Natale in the hall

Opposite page, clockwise from top left: The terrazzo pattern and monochromatic scheme create a calming yet striking look in the spa room; a pair of vintage Murano glass and brass mirrors flanks the entrance to the media room; a view of the sinuous staircase

showcase a more understated aesthetic. Designed in tones of grey and black, the fluting in the ceiling and veins of gold on the white marble backsplash provide the decorative details in this culinary zone. With balanced touches such as these, the home never feels too overwhelming, even with its abundance of colours and textures.

Reflecting on the design process of creating this space from scratch, Natale says: “Following this design from my initial vision right through to the finishing touches certainly made the layering process more seamless and yielded a more cohesive result.”

The owners, too, love how Natale has transformed their house. “They were over the moon to see the design realised. They are painters themselves, and part of the joy for them of embracing this modern palazzo was getting to display their collection of art as well as their own works on its walls.”



Tatler Dining

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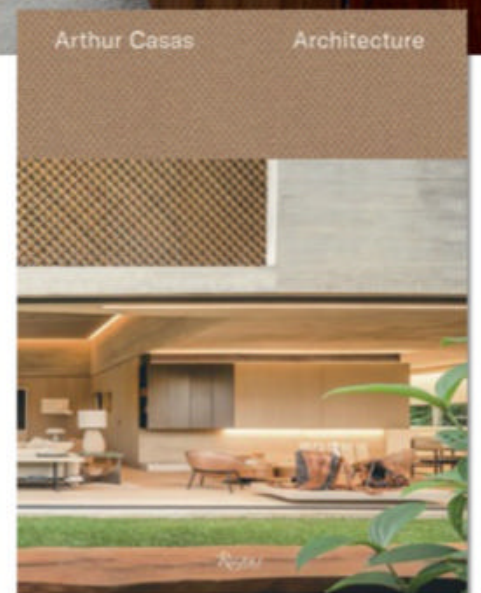
THE LAST WORD

From top: An apartment in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil optimises its splendid views of the sea and the mountains beyond; this house in the woods, also in Brazil, celebrates its verdant location next to the Atlantic Forest

STATE OF PLAY

Discover wondrous examples of tropical architecture and stunning spaces well-connected to the outdoors in this new monograph

For Brazilian architect Arthur Casas, the goal has always been to design multisensorial spaces, be it through light, colours, scents, sounds, or textures. “Each detail matters when a comprehensive experience is at play,” he says. The founder of São Paulo-based Studio Arthur Casas has released a monograph, published by Rizzoli. *Arthur Casas. Architecture* discusses 20 of over 500 projects that the studio has completed, as lensed by celebrated Brazilian photographers Fernando Guerra, Filippo Bamberghi and Mauro Restiffe. From elegant houses in the woods and a bevy of beautiful restaurants to a modern hotel with a fibreglass latticework facade, these projects are the perfect embodiment of the firm’s creative philosophy, showcasing experiential spaces that connect interior areas with the great outdoors. Throughout, an interdisciplinary approach can be keenly felt. As the architect remarks: “To design a building or a chair is the same thing, I face the same difficulties and I apply the same principle that simply results in expressing the same aesthetic language.” Available at Rizzoli; rizzoliusa.com





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